MISSED OPPORTUNITY? WAS IRAN'S GREEN MOVEMENT AN
UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE OPTION?

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Following the disputed 2009 Iranian Presidential elections, the Green Movement demonstrated reformist insurgency potential. Capable movement leadership mobilized resistance groups, tempered participant violence, and espoused objectives compatible with strategic US interests. Despite undisputed constitutional authority, Supreme Leader Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' vicious response to protests highlighted systemic weaknesses vulnerable to non-violent political struggle. Could the United States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009 presidential election to coerce change in the Iranian government advantageous to US interests? This thesis applied a hybrid doctrinal Unconventional Warfare (UW) feasibility criteria and social movement theory to examine Green Movement sponsorship potential. Research concluded successful insurgency criteria and existing regional mechanisms provided the United States Government with UW options.

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ABSTRACT

MISSED OPPORTUNITY? WAS IRAN'S GREEN MOVEMENT AN
UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE OPTION?, by Major Brian Santos, 104 pages.

Following the disputed 2009 Iranian Presidential elections, the Green Movement
demonstrated reformist insurgency potential. Capable movement leadership mobilized
resistance groups, tempered participant violence, and espoused objectives compatible
with strategic US interests. Despite undisputed constitutional authority, Supreme Leader
Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' vicious response to protests
highlighted systemic weaknesses vulnerable to non-violent political struggle. Could the
United States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009
presidential election to coerce change in the Iranian government advantageous to US
interests? This thesis applied a hybrid doctrinal Unconventional Warfare (UW) feasibility
criteria and social movement theory to examine Green Movement sponsorship potential.
Research concluded successful insurgency criteria and existing regional mechanisms
provided the United States Government with UW options.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ATP	Army Techniques Publication
CA	Covert Action
COIN	Counterinsurgency
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps
MOIS	Ministry of Intelligence and Security
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SOF	Special Operations Forces
USG	United States Government
UW	Unconventional Warfare

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> For Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a free and fair election would save the regime. For
> Ayatollah Khamenei, a free and fair election would change the regime.[1]
> — Mehdi Khalaji, *Foreign Policy Initiative*

From over 400 applicants, the Islamic Republic of Iran's Guardian Council approved three candidates to challenge incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2009 elections.[2] Incorrectly calculating long political absence hurt his election prospect, the Council allowed former wartime Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi to run.[3] Candidates received three weeks to campaign; reformers, women's activists, and student organizations united to support Mousavi who quickly transformed into the oppositional favourite.[4] June 3rd's televised debate between Mousavi and President Ahmadinejad displayed unprecedented personal attacks from both contenders. The challenger condemned the incumbent's failing foreign policy, repressive government, and poor economic stewardship.[5] Ahmadinejad parried administration criticisms, accused

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[1] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement," April 6, 2010, accessed September 21, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicyi.org/event/iran/greenmovement.

[2] Annabelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabany, *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 167, accessed April 4, 2014, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/carl/Doc?id=10437997&ppg=185.

[3] Robin Wright, ed., *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Endowment of the United States Institute of Peace, 2010), 42.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Charlie Szrom, *Mousavi vs Ahmadinejad: Examing Iran's First Major Presidential Debate* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2009).

Mousavi of corruption, and questioned the doctorate legitimacy of Mousavi's wife.[6]

Technology savvy viewers quickly disseminated debate footage through web-based

social network services.[7] Social media platforms afforded international access to the

political event increasing worldwide enthusiasm. The candidates capitalized on social

media to organize political rallies, communicate agendas, counter criticisms, and attract

the contested diaspora vote.[8] Supporters wore the color green to demonstrations, evolving

into the Green Wave and finally the reformist Green Movement Party led by Mousavi.

The movement materialized into a cry for equal rights, political and social freedoms, and

the eradication of government repression.

      The June 12 election results reported a 65 percent incumbent landslide.[9]

Motivated by fraud allegations and mobilized through social media platforms Twitter and

Facebook, hundreds of thousands protested in Tehran.[10] Unprepared for a massive

demonstration, the government unleashed internal security forces against the

demonstrators. Thousands were beaten, hundreds arrested, and dozens of unarmed

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[6] Szrom, *Mousavi vs Ahmadinejad.*

[7] Sreberny and Khiabany, *Blogistan*, 167.

[8] Research and Analysis Division, *Directed Study of Iran* (USSOCOM, USGI, 2010), 5-11.

[9] Matthew Carrieri, Ali Karimzadeh Bangi, Saad Omar Khan, and Saffron Suud, *After the Green Movement: Internet Controls in Iran, 2009-2012,* Iran Report, OpenNet Initiative, 2013, 4, accessed October 12, 2014, https://opennet.net/sites/ opennet.net/files/iranreport.pdf.

[10] Somayeh Moghanizadeh, "The Role of Social Media in Iran's Green Movement" (Master's Thesis, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, 2013).

Iranian civilians killed.[11] Spectators captured events on cellular phone cameras and posted video across social media accounts for international distribution. These events circulated across the internet and highlighted Iran's pervasive human rights abuses, provoking international appeal for Western intervention. Contrary to regime expectations, the brutality invigorated protesters and built alliances among repressed social groups, moderate clerics, and elements of the merchant class.[12] Initially the government suspended internet and cellular phone accessibility to prevent information distribution.[13] Within days, government owned service providers restored operation and the regime targeted organizers and dissidents through cyber correspondence.[14] Supreme Leader Khamenei defended the election results and criminalized protesters for conspiring with Western sponsors to overthrow the Islamic Republic.[15] Khamenei applauded the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) for defending the regime, justifying violence against the growing domestic discontent. Two days later, tens of thousands protested against well prepared security forces. The event produced greater violence revealed by graphic footage of 26-year-old bystander Neda Agha-Soltan's death. Shot by civilian law

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[11] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 42.

[12] Slater Bakhtavar, *Iran: The Green Movement* (Irving: Parsa Enterprises 2009).

[13] Moghanizadeh, "The Role of Social Media in Iran's Green Movement," 21.

[14] Sara Beth Elson, Douglas Yeung, Parisa Roshan, S. R. Bohandy, and Alireza Nader, *Using Social Media to Gauge Iranian Public Opinion and Mood After the 2009 Election* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2012), 15.

[15] BBC Monitoring, OpenSource.gov, 15 September 2009, accessed July 12, 2014, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/IAP20090915006001#index=3&searchKey=15763829&rpp=10.

enforcement, Agha-Soltan represented just one example of at least 47 confirmed civilian deaths.[16] The Islamic Republic imprisoned or expelled foreign journalists and diplomats who questioned the government's reaction or candidly reported the events.[17] Troubled by the violence depicted on television, President Obama informed the Iranian Government the "world is watching."[18] United States mainstream media condemned the Administration for inaction and debated America's role in Iranian domestic affairs. The State Department's response echoed the White House as Secretary Clinton stated, "The United States has refrained from commenting on the election in Iran. We obviously hope that the outcome reflects the genuine will and desire of the Iranian people."[19] As the situation progressed and reports of unwarranted arrests, torture, and prison rape increased, reformist pleas did not result in any clear overt Western action. The cancelled February 11 demonstration marked six months of unsuccessful civil dissidence and the defeat of a potential political revolution.[20] The Green Movement failed to stimulate government reform.

Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* defines unconventional warfare (UW) as the activities "conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce,

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[16] Robert Tait, "Iranian's Green Revolution Refuses to Wither and Die," *The Observer*, 26 December 2009.

[17] Moghanizadeh, "The Role of Social Media in Iran's Green Movement."

[18] Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Berlusconi of Italy in Press Availability* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 2009).

[19] Greg Clary and Shirain Medding. "World Reacts to Iranian Election Results," *CNN*, June 15, 2009, accessed July 26, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/06/15/iran.elections.world.reaction/.

[20]Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 43.

disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area."[21] UW provides policymakers a discrete, indirect, and relatively small scale option applying United States Government (USG) capabilities indirectly through indigenous actors.[22] UW does not always constitute overthrow, successful special operations favor coercion and disruption through a combination of all instruments of national power. The strategic risk and potential effects of UW demands a comprehensive feasibility assessment to quantify and qualify the success potential of a special operations solution.

<u>Purpose of Study</u>

Applying Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare* feasibility for US sponsorship criteria, this thesis assessed the feasibility for US unconventional warfare sponsorship of the Green Movement in Iran following the 2009 Presidential elections. This thesis defined success as coercing significant Iranian Government reform favorable to US national interests. The author determined the 2009 and 2010 civil uprising in Iran was a valuable case study for considering US unconventional warfare feasibility. This research examined the applicability and comprehensiveness of David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, unconventional warfare doctrine, and elements of social movement theory against this case study. This

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[21] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011).

[22] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, September 2013), 1-2.

thesis researched Iranian special operations capabilities, operations, and formations but did not examine or describe US military options applicable to Iran during this period. This thesis should contribute to developing the United States Special Operations Command's future Special Operations Forces (SOF) Network, by evaluating the viability of UW policy options to coerce or disrupt belligerent nations into policies friendly to US interests.

Research Question

Could the United States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009 presidential election to coerce change in the Iranian Government advantageous to US interests?

Assumptions

To limit the thesis to a volume appropriate for the Master of Military Arts and Sciences Program, the author assumed reader familiarity with Persian and Iranian general history, the Islamic Republic's government apparatus, and the IRGC. This thesis focused on the specific historical situation and not a comprehensive study of Iran.

To evaluate the feasibility methodology, the author assumed the USG possessed the authority and capability to locate, engage, and sustain communication with Green Movement affiliates operating both inside and outside of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The USG could obtain operational freedom of manoeuvre in nations bordering Iran. To prevent speculation, the author assumed dissident organizations, individuals, and Green Movement members acted independent of direct or indirect third-party influence during the period researched. For example, corporate interests could have hired protest

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participants to incite security force violence to generate political elite skepticism of current domestic policies resulting in reformations favorable to commercial markets. Although numerous individuals contributed to the organization, the author assumed Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Hojatoleslam Karroubi, and Mohammad Hojatoleslam Khatami constituted the Green Movement's leadership.

Speeches, reports, websites, and foreign documents constituted the majority of usable research. The author assumed accurate translation of both primary and secondary researched material.

The author assumed reader familiarity with Shi'a Islam.

Definitions

The author applied the following definitions to terms used throughout this research.

Auxiliary: For the purpose of unconventional warfare, the support element of the irregular organization whose organization and operations are clandestine in nature and whose members do not openly indicate their sympathy or involvement with the irregular movement.[23]

Counterinsurgency (COIN): Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.[24]

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[23] Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 1-5.

[24] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2013), 1-2.

Conservative: "Highly protective of velayet-e-faqih. Consolidation of Revolution at home is its highest aim. Suspicious of Sunni ethnic groups. Protectionist, populist economic policies." Leadership: Ahmadinejad, Khamenei. Supported by Bazaaris and security apparatus.[25]

Denied area: An area under enemy or unfriendly control in which friendly forces cannot expect to operate successfully within existing operational constraints and force capabilities.[26] An area that is operationally unsuitable for conventional forces due to political, tactical, environmental, or geographical reasons. It is a primary area for SOF.[27]

Guerrilla force: A group of irregular, predominantly indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory.[28]

Insurgency: The organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself.[29]

Proxy: For the purposes of this thesis and in absence of a widely recognized definition, proxy is defined as: an agent or substitute authorized to covertly or overtly act

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[25] Keith Crane, Rollie Lal, and Jeffrey Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008).

[26] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011), GL-7.

[27] Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05, *Army Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2013), 2-1.

[28] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, GL-8.

[29] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, GL-5.

for another person**.** A third party force substituted when two powers cannot directly fight each other.

Reformist: "Seek to moderate clerical rule by strengthening civil institutions. More liberal on social policies. Inclusive stance towards ethnic and religious minorities. Islamic left favors redistributive economic policies." Leadership: Khatami, Karrubi, Mousavi. Supported by intellectuals, youth, minorities, and women's groups.[30]

Resistance movement: An organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability. For the purpose of this thesis, synonymous with dissident organization.[31]

Special Operations: Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and-or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and-or a high degree of risk.[32]

Special warfare: The execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the

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[30] Crane, Lal, and Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities.*

[31] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, GL-11.

[32] Ibid., GL-12.

ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.[33]

Subversion: Actions designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a governing authority.[34]

Surrogate: For the purposes of this thesis, synonymous with proxy.

Limitations of Scope

To produce an unclassified thesis, the author restricted research to open-source information limited to the public domain. To prevent unwitting divulgence of classified information or activities, research excluded communication with individuals contributing to ongoing estimates relative to the researched topic. A variety of research expanded the author's knowledge, contributed to the literature review and methodology, and provided an opportunity for the author to formulate research conclusions.

The thesis analyzed pertinent operational variables (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, information, physical terrain, and time) essential for contextualizing the environment preceding and following the 2009 elections. The period researched concluded approximately one year after the elections. At that time, the Islamic Republic of Iran demonstrated neutralization of a viable insurrection. The author considered subsequent historic events necessary to determine research conclusions and recommendations.

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[33] Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 9.

[34] Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, GL-5.

Research Limitations

The research methodology generated questions necessitating classified or sensitive responses. If practical, the author applied reasonable unclassified data to the research. If impractical, the author avoided analysis of criteria classified in nature. The open source limitation prevented disclosure of pertinent information. The author mitigated this by not addressing possible US options. The quantity of available unclassified data provided sufficient scholarly material. Iran's closed-society restricted primary source collection, the author labored to acquire dissimilar secondary source data and obtained most research from Iranian regional expert analysis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The author's experiences in Iraq and Western Afghanistan inspired initial interest in Iran. Casual reading of Mark Bowden's, *Guests of the Ayatollah* and Robert Bauer's, *The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower* stimulated further research of the Islamic Republic. As a student, exposure to advanced special operations planning and the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment produced reflections on UW policy and the difficulty determining potential success. As coursework uncovered unfamiliar insurgency case studies and revolutionary war theorists, the author questioned the practicality of accurately determining UW feasibility in a fluid, restrictive, or denied environment. This potential gap inspired the author's research methodology, and recurring conflicts between US and Iranian policy in Iraq and Afghanistan aroused fascination in the case study.

Methodology

First, the author researched irregular warfare, counterinsurgency, and unconventional warfare doctrine to formulate comprehensive successful insurgency criteria. This included David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, S.N. Bjelajac's *Guidelines for determining success in Counterinsurgency*, the US Government *Counterinsurgency Guideline January 2009*, the US Government *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency 2012*, ATP 3.05.1 *Unconventional Warfare*, and Training Circular 18-01 *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*. Sufficient information existed to compose relevant characteristics of effective resistance groups.

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The Green Movement sought government reform and disruption of existing injustices differing from most researched case studies intent on government overthrow. The movement predominately endorsed non-violent political action and exhibited no potential for guerrilla warfare. These characteristics exposed limitations in contemporary UW frameworks requiring supplemental considerations. James Spies' *Chewing Sand: A Process for Understanding Counterinsurgency Operations* provides initial insight into social movement theory and introduced the author to literature containing approaches for evaluating the Green Movement's mobilization, framing, and opportunity capability. The combination of these frameworks produced sufficient criteria for developing thesis methodology. The thesis further discusses methodology in chapter 4.

Books

This research began by searching for books on Iran and the Green Movement. Most books on Iran's 2009 Presidential elections or the Green Movement contained speculation, lacked citation, or referenced questionable material. Slater Baktavar's *Iran: the Green Movement*, contextualized the event and provided relevant analysis, but lacked references. This material afforded a valuable historical perspective but insufficient citation prohibited use.

Both *Contemporary Iran* and *The Iran Primer* contributed valuable information. In both cases, subject matter experts assessed Iran's history, government, economics, culture, religion, military, and the 2009 presidential elections. Both books suggested US-Iranian policy options and considered future regime frictions and opportunities. *The Iran Primer* dedicated a chapter to the Green Movement. Both efforts reflected impartial research and derived from scholarly work.

Annabelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabany's *Blogistan* described the impact of information communication technology and social media on Iran. These two authors applied scholarly research to analyze information communication technology usage among demographics and institutions. The final chapter illustrated the Green Movement's usage of internet and social media as an instrument for mobilization. *Blogistan* provided valuable technical insight and confirmed or refuted other similar literature.

The author referenced other books but the above literature represented the most valuable resources from this material format. Although not referenced, Robert Baer's *The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower* contributed to the author's historical perspective, understanding of Persian culture, and appreciation for US misunderstanding of the Islamic Republic.

<u>Reports—Scholarly Works</u>

RAND's *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities* and *Understanding Iran* presented scholarly material researched by subject matter experts to describe the Iranian environment. These reports contributed to the thesis and substantiated or refuted less academic literature. Published prior to the 2009 Iranian elections, both reports illustrated the social and economic challenges pertinent to contemplating US sponsored UW.

The RAND Corporation's *The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps* and United States Army Colonel Corrigan's, *Exploitable Vulnerabilities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps* contributed significantly to the author's understanding of the Iranian internal security

apparatus. Both reports explained the IRGC establishment, constitutional charter, politics, and expanding economic influence. The RAND Corporation's study compiled research from the OpenSource website, scholarly reports, and translated speeches from Iranian sources. Both studies examined the IRGC intelligence apparatus, domestic capability, and vulnerabilities. Both reports presented opportunities for influencing IRGC leadership, agitating existing internal conflict, and undermining organizational strength.

The United States Special Operations Command's *Directed Study of Iran*, by the Universal Strategy Group, conveyed information relevant to the research methodology. However, the report referenced questionable sources and lacked objective analysis. The author primarily used the *Directed Study of Iran* to articulate Iranian constitutional or organizational structures. This study discussed US-Iranian policy options considered by the author during analysis.

The Green Movement Manifesto represented an English translation of the organization's objectives articulated by Iranian reform-movement founders, scholars, and Islamic thinkers. Released a year after the movement's conception, Abdolkarim Soroush's claimed the draft exemplified the organization's 2010 agenda constructed from Mir Houssein Mousavi's speeches. Although difficult to accredit, the manifesto echoed Green Movement leadership ideologies. This work provided the author with concisely articulated organizational goals necessary to assess US compatibility.

Literature existed discussing US strategic options against the Islamic Regime. These reports consider diplomatic, economic, and conventional military opportunities to influence Iran, but the author failed to locate an UW assessment for the researched period. Major Fernando M. Luján's essay *Light Footprints: The Future of American*

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Military Intervention described preemptive military options against threats and opportunities similar to Iran in 2009, but does not assess success potential. Other literature communicated the requirement for special operations infrastructure capable of timely and politically sensitive shaping operations across all regions. These works did not analyze the subject matter of this case study.

The reported effects of social media differed among literature. This thesis considered studies assessing blog word usage to quantify public opinion, studies compiling numerous opinion polls, and literature referencing personal experiences during the period studied. The bulk of these resources generated a consensus regarding the timeline for commercial internet and cellular access, successful mobilization through social media, and security force application of cyber technology for dissident repression.

The author evaluated Iranian expatriate literature to eliminate reporting bias by considering the individual's emigration cause, accuracy of information, and motivation or agenda. Expatriate status did not automatically disqualify literature but the thesis recognized inherent bias in expatriate information. The expatriate's former position in Iran or academic credentials determined literature credibility. If the expatriate demonstrated enduring relations with Green Movement leadership, their credibility increased.

<div align="center">Polls</div>

The author used World Public Opinion's *An Analysis of Multiple Polls of the Iranian Public*, to assess public opinion. The study collected data from numerous foreign and domestic telephonic polls conducted before and after the elections. Polls questioned voter participation, candidate choice, election legitimacy, and similar topics. The author

recognized the challenges to the poll's validity, but World Public Opinion's study adequately addressed respondent dishonesty, and demonstrated results that contradicted expected responses resulting from intimidation or censorship. The thesis sparingly applied the poll as supplemental information to support or refute other references. The author examined other polling measurements but the World Public Opinion study proved the best resource amidst a dearth of related polls available or sufficient for this thesis.

The RAND Corporation's *Using Social Media to Gauge Iranian Public Opinion* attempted to determine popular opinion by analyzing social media messaging during the 2009 Green Movement protests. This study provided valuable contextual information and confirmed events described in other references, but analyzed a particular demographic and contributed minimally to the author's research.

<u>Articles</u>

News articles served as a mechanism for the author to gain context and historical appreciation of the environment. Credible journalism provided first-hand accounts of political rallies, opposition member activities, and security force violence. Journalists confirmed Iran's attacks against domestic news outlets, reporter arrests, and the expulsion of foreign correspondents. Prior to the elections, candidate interviews communicated overt political agendas, motivations, and opinions valuable to the research. News reports quoted anonymous officials who articulated credible opinions on US-Iranian political, military, or economic policies. These articles did not represent scholarly work but did provide insight into US compatibility with Green Movement leadership.

<center>Media</center>

Streaming video from the internet contributed indisputable evidence of IRGC violence. These videos humanized the opposition groups, security forces, and civilian casualties, influencing the author's appreciation for Green Movement member resilience and potential. The author accepted the authenticity of video procured from reputable news outlets only. Reputable news outlets constituted organizations producing printed publication as well as electronic media, espousing standards of accuracy and integrity, and receptive to evidence of reporting errors.

Some examples of this media: from the bbc news website; *BBC Reporter in Tehran, Violent Protests*, the *Fresh Rally Takes Place in Tehran,* and *Masses Mourn Protesters in Iran*. Along with *Fatal Shooting At Tehran Protest Rally*, from the news sky website.

Movies like *The Green Wave* did not contribute to this essay; however, documentaries did frame the environment and demonstrated an expatriate opinion of Iran. These films provided exposure to imprisoned authors, translated speeches, and served as an instrument for considering the viability of other literature.

<center>Analysis of Literature</center>

Sufficient literature existed to support the thesis methodology. Despite the Islamic Regime's characterization as a closed society, academic and media access to Iranian citizens and officials afforded significant primary source references. USG directed research institute studies offered content favorable to the thesis' methodology but generally favored conventional US predilections. The internet contained volumes of scholarly, journalistic, and expatriate material from reports, journal articles, academic

institute articles, and personal blogs. Not all information met research credibility, but these sources inspired further research or expanded the author's appreciation for the case study.

Sufficient UW doctrine and case studies existed to provide historic insight into determining Green Movement acceptability for US sponsorship.

Gaps in the Record

The author's literature review identified substantial gaps in quantifiably determining the feasibility of US sponsored UW. Both ATP 3.05.1 *Unconventional Warfare* and Training Circular 18-01 *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* provided comprehensive environmental assessments for considering US sponsorship, but neither contained a quantifiable measurement for success. S. N. Bjelajac's *Guidelines for Measuring Success in Counterinsurgency* and the US Government's *Guide for the Analysis of Insurgency* discussed critical factors for insurgent success, but lack a statistical instrument for gauging potential outcome. Chapter 5 further discusses this gap.

Significance of Thesis in Relation
to Existing Literature

This research contributed to existing studies of both The Islamic Republic of Iran in 2009 and the Green Movement. It analyzed Iranian vulnerabilities and opportunities from a theater special operations perspective. The thesis integrated current special operations doctrine and social movement theory concepts to evaluate dissident movement potential. Although limited by classification, this thesis developed a refined assessment methodology useful to analyze historic or future case studies. This essay identified the challenge contemporary planners face in determining credible information, relevant

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questions, and a thorough assessment of strategic conditions necessary for assessing an UW option.

Collecting sufficient literature and investigating all resource options proved challenging, but determining an effective methodology for comprehensively assessing UW feasibility became equally difficult. The methodology required integrating multiple proven frameworks and concisely evaluating an under-explored case study. Chapter 3 describes the author's concept for effectively calculating US unconventional warfare success potential within thesis constraints.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methods of Information Collection

The researcher limited this thesis to unclassified, open-source information only. This thesis integrated UW doctrine, COIN, and social movement theory subject matter expert framework to answer the research question. Additional web-based information included studies and reports obtained from reputable research groups like the Congressional Research Service, RAND Corporation, Brookings Institute, and other US-Iranian studies and academic research institutions. The author consulted research librarians at the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for assistance with the collection of relevant literature.

Research Methodology

The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines a feasibility assessment as "the basic target analysis that provides an initial determination of the viability of a proposed target for special operations forces employment."[35] The thesis' methodology derived from ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare* and Training Circular 18-01, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* feasibility assessment for US sponsorship of UW and favorable resistance movement characteristics. The author integrated David Galula's *Counterinsurgency: Warfare Theory and Practice* prerequisites for successful insurgency. Finally, the author considered aspects of social movement

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[35] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010, as amended through August 2014), 99.

theory applicable to insurgent organizations, specifically political opportunities,

mobilizing structures, and framing processes, as defined in James Spies' examination of

revolutionary theory in *Chewing Sand: The Process for Understanding*

Counterinsurgency Operations or supplementary literature applicable to the

methodology.

First, chapter 4 evaluated the physical and human environmental conditions

deemed necessary for a successful insurgency. Was Iran a weakened or unconsolidated

government or occupying power? The thesis answered this question by considering two

factors. Did the Green Movement control the population and did the Iranian Government

suffer domestic and external problems. Domestically, the section considered Iran's

economy, human rights violations, infringement of personal freedoms, gender

inequalities, and state violence—intimidation; then reviewed those issues' significance to

UW feasibility. Sanctions and resolutions stemming from Iranian human rights and

nuclear weapons violations compounded with diplomatic and economic repercussions of

state sponsored terrorism constituted external factors that weakened the regime. This

section further measured Iranian weakness by applying Galula's contributing factors of

an absence of popular support, resoluteness of COIN leadership, Iran's knowledge of

COIN, and the government's machine for control of the population. Then, concluded by

evaluating UW potential against determined Iranian vulnerabilities.

Chapter 4 then assessed the will of the population by applying social movement

theory concepts political opportunity, mobilizing structures, relative deprivation, rational

choice, and fence sitters. The section articulated UW factors relevant to the information

gathered by social movement theory considerations. Finally, a will of the population

assessment required Galula's essential "cause" calculated by appraising the Green

Movement's objectives appeal to the Iranian public. This transitioned to an analysis of

Iran's human and physical terrain through UW feasibility criteria to include size, borders,

climate, and human geography. This section contained the most tactical and operational

UW determinations.

Then chapter 4 assessed the Green Movement's possession of favorable resistance

movement characteristics articulated in ATP 3.05.1 *Unconventional Warfare*. This

included the potential for obtaining external support, the willingness to cooperate with

the US, compatible objectives and ideologies, and capable resistance leadership. The

chapter concluded with the author's response to the research question; could the United

States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009 presidential

election to coerce change in the Iranian Government, advantageous to US interests?

Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodology

This methodology's strength derived from the utilization of doctrinal assessment

criteria, developed from historical case studies and the published writings of successful

revolutionaries, insurgents, and counterinsurgents. The methodology resembled the

United States Army's Military Decision Making Process frameworks for mission analysis

operational variables (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure,

physical environment, and time), and civil considerations (areas, structures, capabilities,

organizations, people, and events) providing both the author and the intended audience a

familiar system of logical assessment. The methodology characterizes deliberations

conducted prior to UW course of action development.

The methodology's weakness results from quantifying qualitative data. The unclassified material collected did not represent all information necessary to justify a US unconventional warfare option, but satisfied the research question and provided an instrument to appraise current UW feasibility criteria. The chapter 4 conclusion demonstrated the methodology's limitations and chapter 5 recommended further research to consider the potential for a statistical quantification of feasibility.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> There are two ways of confronting the country's problems. One is through a management style based on adventurism, instability, play-acting, exaggerations, wrongdoing, being secretive, self-importance, superficiality and ignoring the law. The second way is based on realism, respect, openness, collective wisdom and avoiding extremism.[36]
>
> — Mir Hossein Mousavi, *Financial Times*

> However, Iran often defies expectations and has proven maddeningly immune from adhering to conventional wisdom. Listen to an Iranian exile opposed to the Islamic regime for five minutes and you'll be convinced that the regime's days are numbered not in years, but in months. Listen to a regime apologist for five minutes and you might be persuaded that Western powers are indeed fomenting the revolt and that the government will weather the storm and emerge as powerful as ever.[37]
>
> — Hooman Majid, *Foreign Policy*

Weakened or Unconsolidated Government or Occupying Power

As defined by ATP 3.05.1, "Conditions must sufficiently divide or weaken the organizational mechanisms that the ruling regime uses to maintain control over the civilian population for the resistance to successfully organize the minimum core of clandestine activities."[38] In 2009, foreign and domestic difficulties challenged the Islamic

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[36] Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "FT Interview: Mir-Hossein Moussavi," *Financial Times*, April 13, 2009, accessed September 23, 2014, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/a2466224-2824-11de-8dbf-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3EASK2x00.

[37] Hooman Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement," *Foreign Policy*, January 6, 2010, accessed September 21, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/06/think_again_irans_green_movement.

[38] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, 1-6 – 1-7.

Regime. This section assessed the significance of these problems and considered the likelihood Iran was a lucrative UW consideration, or could have become weakened or unconsolidated.

Reformist insurgencies endeavor to coerce an existing government "to alter its policies or undertake political, economic, or social reforms."[39] Several conditions must exist to allow initial grievances to cultivate into an organized resistance movement. Primarily, the occupying powers must contain vulnerabilities or weaknesses that demonstrate destabilizing potential. These weaknesses can manifest in disadvantageous government policies, a corrupt or inept political system, and economic frailty.[40] These conditions may be conspicuous or susceptible to future public exposure. This section assessed Iran's vulnerability in 2009. Did the Green Movement control the Iranian public? If not, did Iran demonstrate governmental weakness or political divide? If so, what factors contributed to Iran's weaknesses and could a US sponsored Green Movement have capitalized on those conditions? This section established the preliminary assessment of UW potential. If Iran proved invulnerable then nonviolent political activity could never evolve into a legitimate insurgency.

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[39] U.S. Government, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgencies* (US Government, 2012), 3, accessed May 6, 2014, http://www.mccdc.marines.mil/Portals/172/Docs/ SWCIWID/COIN/Doctrine/Guide%20to%20the%20Analysis%20of%20Counterinsurgen cy.pdf.

[40] Ibid., 5-7.

Is The Green Movement in Control of the Population?
Is there Potential for it?

In 2009, the Green Movement demonstrated several of the requisite insurgent components of leadership; an underground, and a telecommunications infrastructure that enabled the movement to expand from presidential candidate supporters to a distinguishable opposition group. The Green Movement presented an opportunity for organizational change through an amalgamation of diverse demographics motivated to contest government repression of civil liberties. Iranian state power and dominant internal security forces dissuaded conventional resistance movement possibility, but this thesis reveals that Green Movement characteristics exhibited potential for legitimate reform opportunity. When considering the movement's capability, the organization exceeded three-phased insurgency evaluation, transforming from latent and incipient to guerrilla warfare and finally a war of movement and required evaluation as a non-violent revolutionary mechanism. This organization possessed immediate political access and rapid member recruitment inspiring aggressive government constraint, systemic mismanagement, and counterinsurgent weaknesses critical to resistance growth.[41] For example, those under 30 comprised more than 60 percent of Iran's 73 million citizens.[42] As the most politically active in the Islamic world, Iranian youth represented "the greatest threat to theocratic rule."[43] Politically attractive to students, the reformist Green Movement agenda mobilized millions to protest fraudulent elections. The Green

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[41] James Spies, *Chewing Sand: A Process for Understanding Counter Insurgency Operations* (Boston: McGraw Hill Learning Solutions, 2005), v.

[42] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 49.

[43] Ibid.

Movement developed a capacity for recruitment but never demonstrated population control, nor did it demonstrably possess substantial minority group patronage. In subsequent sections, this thesis illustrated where those opportunities may have existed and been missed, while the author explores the Green Movement population and diversity.

<div align="center">Weakness of the Counterinsurgent. Do Domestic
or External Problems Exist in the Regime?</div>

This thesis considered domestic and external problems to determine if Iran was a weakened or unconsolidated state. From the broad range of potential factors influencing domestic problems, the author sub-categorized domestic problems into manageable and researchable criteria represented by five relevant topics: economy, human rights, personal freedoms—censorship, gender inequality, and government directed violence. The thesis subcategorized external problems into sanctions—resolutions and state sponsored terrorism.

<u>Domestic Problems</u>

Economy

Four significant factors contributed to Iran's economic vulnerability in 2009. Iran possessed a wealth of natural resources, especially petroleum, and its economy depended heavily on oil and natural gas sectors.[44] Unfortunately for Iran, they lacked the production and refinement capacity, so they exported their crude at bargain rates, and paid premiums for refined petroleum in return. Subsidized fuel prices precipitated

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[44] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 22.

runaway consumption and increased gasoline importing because Iranian refineries could not meet domestic market demand.[45] Sanctions resulting from human rights offenses and nuclear program non-compliance further disrupted economic relations with Eastern nations and stymied foreign investment in technology and crude oil development.[46] Government interference and corruption produced rigid control of all aspects of the private sector, a high inflation and unemployment rate (12.5 percent), and a Gross Domestic Product less than the state of Ohio with a 52 billion dollar budget deficit.[47] Morale of the nation was sinking and President Ahmadinejad's Administration bore additional brunt, expectation, and scrutiny by Iranians.

Ahmadinejad's 2005 presidential campaign "emphasized economic themes" and he pledged to distribute oil revenues at the height of substantial oil price increases.[48] These higher oil prices encouraged populist spending programs to support social welfare, but as rates fell Ahmadinejad depleted the Oil Stabilization Fund to support government-spending levels.[49] Ahmadinejad's provocative anti-Israeli rhetoric and continued defiance of United Nations nuclear regulations deflated foreign investment and escalated market risk.[50] Ahmadinejad asserted control over the oil and gas sector by facilitating the replacement of former President Rafsanjani allies with Khatam ul-Anbia, the construction

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[45] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 101.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 9.

[48] Ibid., 95.

[49] Ibid., 101.

[50] Ibid., 98.

arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.[51] The company won contracts to develop infrastructure in both the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, but international sanctions deterred banks from project funding and slowed progress.[52] Prior to the elections, Ahmadinejad introduced tough measures to diminish government subsidies estimated around 25 percent of Iran's Gross Domestic Product in 2009.[53] Iran's Parliament Research Center estimated Ahmadinejad's plan might escalate the existing 60 percent inflation rate and increase the country's 9 million impoverished citizens.[54]

"Revolutionary organizations called *bonyads* were set up after the 1979 Revolution to safeguard the ideological orientation of the Islamic state and redistribute money to poor and rural inhabitants."[55] *Bonyads* benefited from substantial subsidies imposed upon a challenged Iranian budget.[56] "These foundations are controlled by senior clerics and former members of the Iranian government, are not officially associated with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security and are therefore not under any scrutiny from the Iranian government itself or from international agencies . . . there are as many as 123 *bonyads* that account for 33 percent to 40 percent of Iran's GDP."[57] The system

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[51] Ibid., 100.

[52] Ibid., 102.

[53] Ibid., 104.

[54] Ibid., 106.

[55] Crane, Lal, and Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities*, 81.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 11.

subsidized privileged merchants engendering discontent against the clerical government, from private competitors outside of special status.

"Bazaars in Iran are more than local markets . . . they are urban marketplaces where national and international trade is conducted, political news and gossip is shared, religious and national symbols are on display and various classes mingle."[58] Bazaars remain central to Iran's economic and political history and have fostered alliances with social groups, clergy, and anti-government protest when grievances coincided.[59] However, compared to students, workers, and women, *bazaaris* have limited anti-regime activities.[60] Sanctions and regime imposed restrictions on lucrative western markets severely hinder bazaar opportunity and injure political relationships.[61] *Bazaaris* supported reformist presidential candidates Khatami and Mousavi in 1997, 2001, and 2009 as well as government repeal of proposed tax increases.[62] Analysts recognized a changing bazaar environment caused by growing IRGC influence, the emergence of external merchandising options (mini-malls), and the growing disparity between privileged merchants linked to political power and merchants effected by government interference. According to Jeff Goodwin, Iran's revolution engendering practice of "state

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[58] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 108.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 109.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

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sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions;" the previous four government issues created an environment ripe for UW.[63]

Iran's deteriorating economy afforded the Green Movement an opportunity to capitalize on an incipient disgruntled corporate establishment. Mousavi's notoriety for economic prowess during the Iran-Iraq War legitimized Green Movement capacity for improving commerce, foreign investment, and infrastructure development. However, without encouraging support or marginalizing expanding IRGC affiliates, the Green Movement could not rally domestic and foreign business interests. An UW approach may have fostered corporate ideological investment in the movement. This consideration exceeded the scope of this thesis and warrants further research consideration, specifically United States SOF's capacity for integrating economic instruments of power into an UW concept.

Human Rights

Human rights violations pervaded the author's research. Despite Iranian assertion of Non-Government Organization (NGO) cooperation to the United Nations in the Universal Periodic Review on human rights, Amnesty International had not been allowed in the regime for "fact-finding purposes or to hold Government talks since 1979."[64] Amnesty International received substantial reporting of widespread discrimination against minority groups, state sponsored illegal arrests, torture, rape, and violent actions

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[63] Spies, *Chewing Sand*, 19.

[64] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison: Iran One Year After the Election* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2010), 23.

against peaceful dissident organizations.[65] Grand Ayatollah Montezari, once a successor to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini, received political exclusion for criticizing the regime's infractions against human rights.[66] Constitutional lack of transparency and flawed criminal code undermined government oversight mechanisms, contributing to law enforcement and internal security force abuses of arrest and detention authorities.[67]

Human rights violations produced international sanctions that further crippled a weak economy. These violent regime sponsored activities stimulated the principle Green Movement objective of curtailing human rights violations. Well conceived messaging garnered patronage from civil, military, and governmental leadership and attracted international attention. If the movement communicated conservative, measurable, and realistic legislative options without infuriating conventional leadership, they could have attracted more breadth from party lines by attributing social constraints to Ahmadinejad Administration failures.[68] Better message framing against incumbent human rights atrocities could have encouraged political disassociation and improved regime leadership's acceptance of Mousavi.

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[65] Amnesty International, "Human Rights Violations Persist in Iran 30 Years after Islamic Revolution," February 9, 2009, accessed September 23, 2014, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/feature-stories/human-rights-violations-persist-iran-30-years-islamic-revolution-20090209.

[66] Research and Analysis Division, *Directed Study of Iran*, 31-32.

[67] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison*, 23.

[68] Spies, *Chewing Sand*, 15.

Personal Freedoms—Censorship

Despite constitutional inclusion of ethnic and religious minority groups, their persecution increased under the Ahmadinejad Administration and "these groups have faced repressions such as property confiscation, denial of employment, restrictions on social, cultural, linguistic and religious freedoms, arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, corporal punishment, and sometimes death penalty sentencing."[69] The regime applied vague constitutional articles authorizing government suppression of perceived national security threats to increase repression of women, minority groups, and other anti-Islamic Republic organizations.[70] Insulting Islam, distributing "anti-regime" propaganda or inciting public anxiety described criminal offenses deemed hostile to the regime's fundamental principles.[71] The administration invoked these articles to suppress pro-reform publications, websites, and communication apparatus preventing civil freedom of expression.[72] Reportedly, in 2003 the government arrested, brutally raped, beat and tortured to death Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi for photographing a protest outside of a Tehran prison.[73] The 2005 Mahabad student demonstrations commemorating the 1999 student protests resulted in the "atrocious murder of prominent

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[69] Amy Kirk, "Political Repression and Islam in Iran," *Human Rights and Human Welfare* (2010): 72.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 73.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Zahra Kazemi, "Iran's Changing Story," CBC News Online, updated November 16, 2005, accessed September 22, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kazemi/.

activist, Shawaneh Ghaderi who was shot, tied to a car, and dragged through the streets of Tehran."[74] Censorship extended to all forms of media and entertainment. Public displeasure escalated under Ahmadinejad's contrast with former President Khatami's liberal policies on art and entertainment. This demonstrated Jeff Goodwin's second revolution engendering state practice "repression and/or exclusion of mobilized groups from state power or resources."[75]

With youth representing 60 percent of the population, Mousavi should have capitalized on the infringement of personal freedoms. Juxtaposing Iran's oppressive measures against Western quality of life highlights the relative deprivation and disparity between expectation and outcome experienced by Iranian youth.[76] Similar to the human rights violations, a measured approach to inciting popular interest in moderate freedoms could rouse both reformist and conservative appeal. As noted in previous sections and discussed in detail during the thesis' conclusion, messaging constituted the greatest tool available to the Green Movement. United States SOF and movement leadership's effective integration, successful domestic and international inform and influence operations, and undermining internal security force neutralization was essential.

Gender Inequalities

Culture, religion, and politics overpowered a determined Iranian female movement. Endorsed by the most eminent Shi'a cleric Ayatollah Hakim in 1967,

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[74] Kirk, "Political Repression and Islam in Iran," 73.

[75] Spies, *Chewing Sand*, 20.

[76] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 25.

parliament passed the Family Protection Law expanding women's rights in marriage, divorce, child custody, and raising the marriage age from 13 to 15 for girls.[77] In 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini suspended the Family Protection Law as un-Islamic. The legal female marriageable age returned to nine, women could no longer serve as judges, women lost divorce privileges, and were prohibited from serving in the army.[78] Men remained free to divorce wives by simple declaration, retained exclusive custody of children, and obtained the right of polygamy.[79] In 1981, parliament approved the Islamic Law of Retribution permitting "flogging, stoning, and payment of blood money for crimes ranging from adultery to violation of Islamic dress codes."[80] Men can legally murder adulterous wives and their lovers, while fathers who killed their children only faced "punishment in the discretion of the court."[81] In 2005, more than 250 citizens attempted the first women's rights demonstration.[82] The *Basij* violently responded, the government shut down the leading Feminist magazine, and repression of women's movements increased.[83] "In 2006, a group of veteran activists created the One Million Signatures Campaign . . . a grassroots effort to gather signatures and educate the Iranian

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[77] Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, *Silencing the Women's Rights Movement in Iran* (New Haven: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, 2010), 5.

[78] Ibid., 6.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 12.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Kirk, "Political Repression and Islam in Iran," 72.

[83] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 47.

public on the inequalities suffered by women" but their International Women's Day demonstration collapsed when baton-wielding police beat and arrested activists.[84] Their subsequent attempts achieved similar violent responses and suffered greatly from then-Intelligence Minister Qolam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei's claim that the women's movement represented a foreign backed soft overthrow of the Islamic Republic.[85] In 2008, only nine women out of 7,168 candidates won parliamentary seats.[86]

The women's movement represented a pre-existing organized, determined, and internationally appealing organization ripe for Green Movement affiliation. The Green Movement's challenge would not be attracting female support but repulsing moderate males by embracing comprehensive reformist policies. Green Movement advisors must have effectively determined reformist objectives acceptable to the largest supporter base. This likely included scaled measures to improve female labor opportunities, human rights, and political access. While the female population held numerical strength, the Green Movement required politically moderate allure and could not pledge immediate gender equality. The author's assessment for moderation conflicts with the Green Movement's initial proclaimed gender equality objectives discussed further in the political opportunities section. This thesis cannot determine if conspicuous feminist policies disrupted Green Movement potential. The subject warrants further research and necessitates consideration by UW planners. Specifically, what volume of equal rights

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[84] Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, *Silencing the Women's Rights Movement in Iran*, 1.

[85] Ibid., 8.

[86] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 47.

activity can unite the largest population support without transforming into a polarizing issue? The female population exhibited favorable characteristics for US influence and merits independent study, as an organization feasible for sponsorship.

State Violence—Intimidation

Since President Ahmadinejad's election in 2005, claims against the Islamic Republic's use of assassinations, executions, intimidations, torture, prisoner rape, and show trials increased. Iranian officials reported over 5,000 arrests following the initial June 13 election protest.[87] The regime suppressed "many senior members of political parties . . . linked to former President Mohammad Khatami" or Mir Hossein Mousavi's candidacy.[88] The government detained clerics connected to the late Grand Ayatollah Montezari and expanded activities against known resistance organizations.[89] *Basij* detained *Baha'I* and Kurd minority groups leaders as a warning to future demonstrators.[90] Reformist labeled journalists, Iranian Teachers Trade Association members, and other "dissident" social organizations endured internal security force targeting and arrest.[91] The authorities accused "NGOs of being in contact with, or supplying information to, banned groups" and executed "waves of arrests" against human

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[87] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison*, 5.

[88] Ibid., 9.

[89] Ibid., 15.

[90] Ibid., 19.

[91] Ibid., 12-20.

rights activists.[92] The NGO Human Rights Activists in Iran suffered arrests "in

connection with alleged US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) 'cyber networks' . . .

aimed at destabilizing Iran."[93] Mehdi Karroubi "courageously" reported human rights

violations to parliament and became the "voice of human rights in the Islamic

republic."[94] In response, *Basij* attacked Karroubi during a memorial for slain protesters,

"one of his sons was banned from leaving the country, and another was arrested and

beaten during a rally held on the anniversary of the establishment of the Islamic Republic

. . . Mir Hossein Mousavi's nephew was killed in the Ashura demonstrations, and his

personal bodyguard was arrested in mid-May 2009."[95] An IRGC general captured on

YouTube video stated, "If you come to the street, and oppose the regime in favor of Mr.

Mousavi, we don't guarantee you that you wouldn't be raped in the prison."[96] Publicized

reports and video of security force inflicted detainee rape, damaged regime legitimacy

and "caused a significant number of regime loyalists to criticize even the Supreme

Leader's role in these events."[97] This is an example of "indiscriminate, but not

overwhelming, state violence against mobilized groups and oppositional political

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[92] Ibid., 13.

[93] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison*, 14.

[94] Mehrangiz Kar, "Reformist Islam versus Radical Islam in Iran" (Working Paper for Saban Center or Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World (IWR), Washington DC, 2010).

[95] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison*, 9.

[96] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[97] Saeid Golkar, "Liberation or Suppression Technologies? The Internet, the Green Movement and the Regime in Iran," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society* 9, no. 1 (2011): 56.

figures," one of five state practices that engender revolutionary movements.[98]

Advantageous to a US sponsored Green Movement; this characteristic attracts broad

popular support to resistance movements.

External Problems

Sanctions—Resolutions

Ahmadinejad's nuclear weapons program, human rights violations, and state-

sponsored terrorism stimulated punitive financial measures against the Islamic Regime

signifying the strongest non-military tactic available to disrupt Iran.[99] Since 2005, the

United States froze assets affiliated with firms or individuals involved in Iran's terrorism,

Iraqi insurgency, and illegal nuclear weapons programs.[100] As the IRGC penetrated all

aspects of the Iranian markets, the United States believed sanctions against affiliates,

disrupted economic growth, breeding concessions to international regulations. The

United Nations resolutions punished Iran's behavior with the United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1737, directing member nations to prevent the "supply, sale, or

transfer of materials to Iran that could be used for nuclear or ballistic missile programs"

which froze the financial assets of 22 corporations and individuals.[101] Six United Nations

resolutions "designated a total of 75 organizations and 41 individuals for their

involvement in Iran's nuclear or ballistic missile program or for their affiliation with the

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[98] Spies, *Chewing Sand*, 19.

[99] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 123.

[100] Ibid., 116.

[101] Ibid., 120.

IRGC."[102] In another devastating hit to Iran's economy, "the Paris-based, Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development, comprising the world's 32 strongest

economies, raised Iran's risk rating in early 2006."[103] Conflicting analysis suggests

sanctions did not stymie IRGC influence, but created opportunities for further economic

infiltrations. Author and Central Eurasian Studies professor Dr. Jamsheed Choksy

believes:

> As the U.S. government convinces growing numbers of multinational corporations to cease business with Iran, the IRGC's development wing is stepping in to fill the void. Seizing the opportunities created by international sanctions, the IRGC's ever-increasing array of companies is steadily taking over every major industrial sector within Iran. They are utilizing their growing industrial expertise to engage in international trade, construction, and military-related ventures in other Third World countries. Because the state sector provides a major employment pool, the military is entangling the general population in its tentacles. Moreover, as ostensibly private companies are increasingly tied to the executive branch and its supporters via financial stakes, the positions of Ahmadinejad and the IRGC grow stronger vis-à-vis the clergy.[104]

The effectiveness of sanctions and the economic repercussions associated with the

IRGC exceeded this research and is worthy of further independent study. Regarding

relevance to the feasibility of US sponsorship of UW in Iran, sanctions unquestionably

disrupt Iran's economic potential and represent an opportunity for the Green Movement

to message against Ahmadinejad's failing policy. Movement leadership should have

fostered enthusiasm by promoting counter-policies and articulating moderate nuclear

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[102] Ibid., 122.

[103] Ibid., 125.

[104] Jamsheed K. Choksy, "Why Iran's Islamic Government is Unraveling," *Current Trends in Islamic Ideology* 10 (2010): 29.

energy and human rights objectives that could both retain conservative appeal and encourage mass interest, with the promise of reducing international financial penalties.

State Sponsored Terrorism

Iran's sponsorship of worldwide terrorist organizations undermined their diplomatic potential by marginalizing their strategic influence. In 1982, the IRGC created Hezbollah "to export the Islamic revolution to the Arab World".[105] By 1984, Hezbollah conducted no less than four attacks on Western diplomatic missions.[106] Designated as a terrorist organization, Iran's "comprehensive support" of Hezbollah further isolated the regime and Iranians have begun to question the financial and political costs.[107][108] Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini believed that "Islam was the solution and Jihad was the proper means."[109] In the early 1990s, Iran pledged military and financial support approximating $30 million annually to Hamas.[110] Hamas' extensive suicide bombings since 1993 encouraged a foreign terrorist organization designation, by most Western countries, by 1997.[111] Hamas' political victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections transformed the bankrupt organization to governing authority and required increased

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[105] Research and Analysis Division, *Directed Study of Iran*, 79.

[106] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 179.

[107] Research and Analysis Division, *Directed Study of Iran*, 79.

[108] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 180-181.

[109] Ibid., 171-172.

[110] Ibid., 172.

[111] Zachary Laub, "Backgrounders: Hamas," *Council on Foreign Relations,* August 1, 2014, accessed September 28, 2014, http://www.cfr.org/israel/hamas/p8968.

financial support from Iran to a reported cost of $250 million.[112] The US State

Department reported since 2006 Iran "arranged arms shipments to select Taliban

members, including small arms and associated ammunition, rocket propelled grenades,

mortar rounds, 107mm rockets, and plastic explosives."[113] While encouraging Iraqi-Shia

political allies to cooperate with coalition forces, the *Quds* Force conversely "armed,

trained and funded militias associated with these parties, as well as radical insurgent

groups that attack[ed] US forces."[114]

Green Movement leadership could not condemn Iran's constitutionally sanctioned

terrorism sponsorship. The Green Movement could not influence comprehensive reform

eradicating the revolutionary ideology campaign intrinsic to the Islamic Republic's

Government. The United States could not assume Mousavi, Khatami, or Karroubi would

cease "terrorist" operations against Israel or even the United States, were they to lead

Iran. Historically, Iranians communicated contradictory political, economic, and military

messages. The United States must have assumed any self-interested Iranian Government

to include Green Movement members would accept any spectrum of operations against

an ally in support of national interests.

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[112] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 173.

[113] Department of State, "Chapter 3: State Sponsors of Terrorism," in *Country Reports on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2011), accessed September 14, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2010/170260.htm.

[114] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 152.

National Consensus-Popular Support for the Regime

"ATTENTION: Very important message to all Basiji: FUCK YOU. yesterday we saw a 10 years old child die from teargas in his face—could not film, becos militia everywhere."[115] Despite massive demonstrations against regime corruption, abuses, and election fraud, poll studies portrayed a contrasting popular view of the Iranian Government. According to a World Public Opinion study, "Majorities of Iranians expressed confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral process," claiming free and fair elections, impartial state media, and an assumption that Ahmadinejad would be re-elected.[116] Polling further suggested Iranians favored greater freedom of expression, but differed on the government's right to control information considered destabilizing.[117] In RAND's study on social media, Twitter followers expressed anger towards Ahmadinejad, but greater disappointment in the Green Movement's failure to capitalize on dissident support.[118] Karroubi received favorable social media language, likely reflecting his campaign to expose the regime's violence against citizens.[119] Most importantly though, "[Tweets] consistently expressed more positive emotion toward the Green Movement than toward the IRGC and *Basij* across the entire time period examined."[120] In contrast,

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[115] Elson et al., 26.

[116] Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, Stephen Weber, and Evan Lewis, *An Analysis of Multiple Polls of the Iranian Public* (College Park: The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, 2010), 10.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Elson et al., 29.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid., 38.

the majority polled expressed satisfaction with the current system, approved of a council of religious scholars to examine laws, and overwhelmingly endorsed Ahmadinejad as the legitimate president.[121]

Polls determined Mousavi and the Green Movement possessed a narrow political opportunity to foster awareness of disparity, induce collective action, and expand support base to create reform potential.[122] Therefore, "system attribution" could have afforded "rationale for movement activity."[123] An earlier contribution to the movement's infrastructure, resource mobilization, and messaging could have generated greater powerbroker sponsorship and discouraged government interference in the election. This research cannot verify either poll or election veracity; however, an apparatus existed for engaging the public, the public could access US sponsored information, and the Green Movement could attract individuals exposed to US controlled media.

<center>Resoluteness of the Counterinsurgent Leadership</center>

Galula identified counterinsurgent components that define a government's potential to withstand a dissident organization. Of these components, this thesis analyzed leadership capabilities of the IRGC, *Basij*, and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), specifically these organizations' COIN knowledge, their application mechanism, and their cooperation with the central government.

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[121] Kull et al., *An Analysis of Multiple Polls of the Iranian Public*, 10.

[122] Spies, *Chewing Sand*.

[123] Ibid., 35.

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IRGC Leadership

Among others, the IRGC's responsibilities included "apprehending or liquidating counter-revolutionary elements, battling armed counterrevolutionaries, and defending against attacks and the activities of foreign forces inside Iran."[124] In 2007, the IRGC identified externally supported domestic insurgencies, manifested in reformist movements and student protests as the greatest national security concern.[125] IRGC leadership reoriented mission focus internally and expanded their authorities into social and cultural roles that extended IRGC influence from national to neighborhood level effectively infiltrating operators into all aspects of civil society.[126] Prior to the 2009 to 2010 internal security force abuses against Iranian citizens, external assessments concluded that an overwhelming solidarity existed within the IRGC. As substantiated reports of killings, rape, and torture increased, evidence of ideological disparity surfaced. According to Colonel Corrigan's study of IRGC vulnerabilities, 30 year Pasdaran Veteran now political dissident and expatriate activist General Mohammad Reza Mahdi claimed, "The current members of the Revolutionary Guard are saying that they have become very disheartened. . . . The regime is sinking."[127] Despite Ahmadinejad's association with the Revolutionary Guard, Hoorman Majid's *Foreign Policy* article "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement" indicated that in 2009 many former IRGC

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[124] Colonel Sean J. Corrigan, "Exploitable Vulnerabilities of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps" (Research Project, United States Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2011), 2.

[125] Ibid., 23.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 12.

commanders opposed Ahmadinejad.[128] According to Mehdi Khalaji, "you cannot find different factions within [the] army. But there are many economic and political factions within Revolutionary Guard."[129]

The Green Movement could not neutralize an approximate 125,000 IRGC personnel, but research revealed human factors containing vulnerabilities. The IRGC was not indestructible but penetrable. Despite IRGC leadership's capacity for suppressing insurgency, the self-determined "velvet revolution" warranted paranoia. IRGC actions against protesters revealed government acknowledged vulnerability to insurgency. The revolutionary government's origin illustrates that determined Iranian intellectuals and clerics, weary of a repressive central government can integrate motivations and accomplish reform or regime change.

Basij Leadership

The Islamic Republic mobilized the *Basij* in 1999 to suppress anti-government student protests.[130] Neighborhood clergy, trusted citizens, and legal associations recruited, selected, and supervised *Basij* members through local mosques, affording the IRGC immediate situational awareness and rapid response capability across the entire country.[131] Approximately 90,000 active members with another 300,000 reservists countered "anti-Islamic" demonstrations at high schools, universities, factories, and

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[128] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[129] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[130] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 63.

[131] Ibid.

social organizations.[132] Supreme Leader Khamenei activated *Basij* to control mass protests following the disputed 2009 Presidential election.[133] The organization could not suppress demonstrations without local Police Force augmentation and excessive violence.[134] Former *Basij* Commander Hossein Taeb claimed eight *Basij* killed and 300 wounded during anti-government protests necessitated the IRGC employ militia members from other districts and provinces to defeat the unrest.[135] The Iranian press reported that *Basij* refused to commit violence against their neighbors or deserted their positions after commanders ordered them to intimidate, harass or beat up fellow students.[136] Former *Basij* officer Mohammad Hussein Torkaman defected after witnessing the IRGC brutality against internal opposition and described the deteriorating environment by saying the Supreme Leader and President "brought in foreign mercenaries to protect them because they were uncertain of their own security forces."[137]

The division between professional military and civilian-soldier presented an opportunity for rift between the IRGC and *Basij* leadership. IRGC atrocities against Iranians required less moral displacement than local *Basij* militia violence against neighborhood personalities, resulting in a progressively dysfunctional security apparatus.

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 62.

[134] Ibid., 64.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 63.

[137] Corrigan, "Exploitable Vulnerabilities of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," 12.

The *Basij* appeared vulnerable to limited oppositional infiltration. With sufficient resources, assistance, and opportunity a conservative Green Movement could have affected *Basij* cleric and civilian leadership, further weakening local militia effectiveness.

MOIS Leadership

A US Congressional Report accused the MOIS of infiltrating internal opposition groups, monitoring domestic threats and expatriate dissent, arresting alleged spies and dissidents, exposing conspiracies deemed threatening, and maintaining liaison with other foreign intelligence agencies to protect the Islamic Republic's national interests.[138] Constitutionally charged to uncover conspiracy, subversion, espionage, sabotage, and sedition the MOIS threatened Green Movement success.[139] The MOIS condemned the internet as a danger to the world, and asserted the government veraciously investigated service providers to counter espionage.[140] However, the quality of cyber defense and attack remained questionable after the June 2010 Stuxnet virus successfully targeted Iran's uranium-enrichment infrastructure.[141] Former Deputy Prime Minister Mohsen Sazegara told the Foreign Policy Initiative the IRGC's Cyber Army, "hacked my website, and they removed all my home video from . . . because every night I tape 10 minutes home video and post it on YouTube, my website, and send it by Google group and

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[138] Federal Research Division, *Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 2012), 1.

[139] Ibid., 3.

[140] Ibid., 31.

[141] Ibid., 32.

Facebook. They removed all the films from YouTube."[142] Since Iran controlled all internet communication networks, the government blocked civilian access to Facebook the week prior to the Presidential election and disabled text messaging services the night before.[143] As the protests commenced, the government used Facebook and text messaging profiles to identify and arrest Green Movement supporters, campaigners, and political activists.[144] MOIS's Department of Disinformation conducted psychological warfare and disinformation against government opponents, employed information and influence operations to manipulate the media and foreign intelligence services, and exhibited the capacity for effective domestic-surveillance.[145] However, after the 2009 elections, many high-ranking intelligence personnel supported Mousavi compelling the regime "to remove reformist supporters from the ministry."[146]

Internet-based social media created challenges for Iran who targeted "users for posting prohibited content" but faced successful countermeasures like establishing false profiles, accessing the internet from public locations, or using messaging services on disposable devices.[147] Iranian technology based targeting probably was vulnerable to UW

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[142] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[143] Moghanizadeh, "The Role of Social Media in Iran's Green Movement," 20.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Federal Research Division, *Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile*, 32.

[146] Ibid., 5.

[147] Elson et al., 12.

low-tech countermeasures to avoid communication vulnerability.[148] This success would

place greater value on Iranian low-level source operations, requiring UW advisors to

achieve sophisticated information compartmentalization, garner influence over security

force and MOIS leadership, and achieve timely domestic and international organizational

acclaim, to discourage government retribution.

<center>Counterinsurgent Knowledge of COIN</center>

When considering the potential for successful insurgencies, Galula observed the

importance of counterinsurgency leadership's knowledge of COIN.[149] The preponderance

of Iranian leaders responsible for COIN operations participated in the 1979 revolution or

had direct relationships with members of that successful insurgency. This alone should

validate the regime's familiarity with both effective revolution and failed

counterrevolutionary operations. As Iranian expatriate and senior fellow for the

Washington Institute Mehdi Khalaji stated,

> They know how a revolution takes place . . . the underground activities, how you
> can build up a network . . . after [the] revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei . . . started
> to somehow prevent any possibility of doing a coups or another revolution . . .
> creating Revolutionary Guard message and institutions on everything. And then,
> Ayatollah Khamenei came to power, and he tried to somehow confiscate the
> religious establishments . . . have full control over mosques . . . clerical
> institutions, and so on. So, it is very difficult. It's really difficult to bypass the
> regime on all these networks.[150]

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[148] Rosa Brooks, "Why Sticks and Stones will Beat our Drones: The Persistent Dangers of Low-Tech Warfare," *Foreign Policy*, April 4, 2013, accessed October 30, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/04/why_sticks_and_stones_will_ beat_our_drones.

[149] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice* (London: Praeger, 1964).

[150] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

To counter internal threat, the regime erected 6,000 elementary school "resistance centers."[151] School *Basij* Organization leader Brigadier General Mohammad-Saleh Jokar established the program to "fully prepare children for joining Basij units when they transfer to middle schools at the age of 12" because "schoolchildren are more susceptible at a young age than at any other time in their lives" and the government "want[s] to promote and instill into elementary schoolchildren the ideas of the revolution and Basij."[152] Unnamed schoolteachers expressed concern to foreign media that *Basij* presence and selection as headmasters placed national education under the control of security agencies.[153] Teachers confirmed that 4,000 political education experts infiltrated schools across the country to combat Western culture influence and report enemy plots against the Islamic revolution.[154] This likely challenged overt resistance recruiting from neighborhood education organizations requiring creative methods for exploiting unifying grievances.

The regime's COIN experience and response hindered Green Movement potential but the government's insurgency paranoia could backfire and induce further resistance. Security apparatus infiltration of neutral social infrastructures like schools, youth groups, etc. could polarize public opinion, obtaining government support but catalyzing

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[151] Hossein Aryan, "How Schoolchildren Are Brainwashed In Iran," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, May 27, 2010, accessed September 21, 2014, http://www.rferl.org/content/Commentary_How_Schoolchildren_Are_Brainwashed_In_Iran/2054304.html.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

opposition.[155] United States advised subversion and information activities could have

exploited this factor, increasing Green Movement support for collective action.[156]

Machine for the Control of the Population

Galula recognized the importance for the counterinsurgent to control the general

population. As previously discussed in this chapter, the IRGC, *Basij*, and MOIS possess

the domestic security, authority, and competency to defeat a weak dissident organization.

This section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the two remaining contributors to

population control.

<u>Law Enforcement</u>

Iran's Code of Criminal Procedure authorizes local police, non-uniformed *Basij*,

and Revolutionary Guards to conduct arrests.[157] Iran's Supreme National Security

Council could empower other agencies to execute similar authorities but remained

ambiguous without transparency for granting arrest and detention authority.[158] For

example, MOIS does not hold legal arrest authority but under these provisions, they

likely received it, or the Supreme National Security Council never challenged the

detentions.[159] The Iranian Constitution states the accused must receive written

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[155] Paul J. Tompkins Jr., *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies,* 2nd ed. (Fort Bragg, NC: Unites States Army Special Operations Command, 2013).

[156] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, 3-2 – 3-10.

[157] Amnesty International, *From Protest to Prison*, 23.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

communication of charges and the case filed with competent judicial authority within 24 hours but grants judicial issue of temporary detention orders "for cases involving offences concerning national security," effectively permitting uncharged detainee retention to exceed 24 hours.[160] The accused possessed appeal rights but judges could execute unlimited renewals of temporary detention orders effectively providing the counterinsurgent with unlimited detainment authority.[161]

Like any civilian organization, the police vulnerabilities existed in their relationships, personal ideologies, or individual corruption. Law enforcement afforded the greatest local government direct and indirect infiltration opportunity. The geographic dispersion inherent in law enforcement prevented a generalized assessment of influence and exceeds theater intelligence analysis. This organization warrants further research to determine influence feasibility but ultimately constitutes low-level source operations.

The Armed Forces

Iran's *Artesh*, conventional army, navy, and air force exhibited severely limited capability, possessed outdated weapon systems, and adopted irregular warfare doctrine to counter Western military technological prowess.[162] Anthony Cordesman wrote, "The United States could destroy all key elements of Iranian military power in virtually any scenario in a matter of weeks, if Washington had the support of Iran's neighbors."[163]

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[160] Ibid., 24.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*, 66.

[163] Ibid., 69.

According to a Middle East Institute report, uncertain of the magnitude of popular unrest, the regime indicated possible *Artesh* intervention against demonstrators.[164] In opposition, "commanders of several units . . . reportedly released a letter criticizing the IRGC and the Basij for using force to suppress demonstrations and threaten[ed] to intervene against those forces if their abuses continued."[165] However, the *Artesh* neither intervened to protect the population nor supported their fellow law enforcement personnel—to the author they appeared to remain neutral, hedging their bets.[166] The Middle East Institute concluded if the Green Movement successfully seized control of an urban area, "the regime's ability to rally suppressive armed force will be uncertain and potentially counterproductive."[167] "The Artesh will not, under any conceivable circumstance, deploy its ground armor to wrest back control of territory for the regime. . . . The Islamic regime in Iran's ability to defend itself against a massive, sustained popular challenge remains unproved."[168]

The Middle East Institute's assessment warrants further research and exceeded the scope of this thesis. The author could not determine the validity of the Middle East Institute's analysis that the *Artesh* would not support COIN. However, institutional rivalries and ideological differences between the *Artesh* and IRGC provided opportunity

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[164] Hossein Aryan, *The Artesh: Iran's Marginalized Regular Army* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 2011), 11.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid., 12.

[168] Ibid.

for Green Movement objectives to inspire *Artesh* support. Green Movement acquisition of *Artesh* leadership could potentially influence a 500,000 solider support base.

Will of the Population

With assistance, could the Green Movement have matured into a viable force? Was it acceptable to the majority as well as the minority? Despite hard-liner suppression of general unrest the authorities failed to silence "opposition politicians and their supporters or ignore their demands over the long term" and even conservatives voiced a transition to more transparent future elections.[169] The fact the Green Movement continued to exist, overcame government accusations of counterrevolutionary intent, and attracted conservative sympathizers bodes well for the prospect of democratic reform in Iran.[170]As previously determined, Iran demonstrated three state practices conducive to engendering revolutionary action: sponsorship of unpopular arrangements and institutions, repression or exclusion of mobilized groups, and violence against mobilized groups.[171] A fourth practice "corrupt and arbitrary personal rule that alienates, weakens, or divides counterrevolutionary elites" warrants independent research but materializes throughout this essay.[172] For example, during an Iranian-expert forum with the Foreign Policy Initiative, former Middle East case officer for the Central Intelligence Agency Reuel Grechet stated, "the Green Movement really now owns the intellectual classes in

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[169] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[170] Ibid.

[171] Spies, *Chewing Sand*, 19-21.

[172] Ibid.

Iran. They own the middle class in Iran. They own much of the upper class in Iran."[173]

By applying elements of social movement theory and Galula's characteristics of successful insurgencies, this section analyzes the Green Movement's potential for capturing the will of the population.

Political Opportunity

Social movement theory defines political opportunity as "consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements."[174] Point four of the Green Movement's Manifesto recognized "the rights of all the lawful political groups, university student and women movements, the NGOs and civil organizations, and labor unions for lawful activities and the right to peaceful protest according to Article 27 of the constitution."[175] The Manifesto described further political opportunity in point ten's demand for widespread electoral representation responsive to criticism and limited in term.[176] Green Movement member and reformist candidate Mehdi Karroubi pledged to refine discriminatory laws to expand female decision-making positions in government and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a United Nations convention to eradicate the

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[173] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[174] Marco Giugni, "Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly," *Swiss Political Science Review* 15, no. 2 (January 2011): 361-368.

[175] Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohsen Kadivar, Ataollah Mohajerani, Akbar Ganji, and Abdolali Bazargan, "Manifesto for Iran's Green Movement," *New Prospectives Quarterly* (Spring 2010).

[176] Abdolkarim Soroush et al., "Manifesto for Iran's Green Movement."

discrimination against women's fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.[177] As support increased and political options presented themselves, reformist elites such as Former President Khatami and former Speaker of Parliament Karroubi entered the organization. This overt support exhibited immediate access to the regime's political machinery and contributed to the movement's rapid growth. Following Mousavi's proclamation of Green Movement demands on civil rights, Expediency Council conservative and 2009 Presidential election candidate Mohsen Rezai "suggested that the government should listen to Mousavi's demands, describing them as 'constructive.'"[178] The Green Movement's foundation on reformist political elites not only affords immediate member political opportunity but legitimizes organization leadership credibility for UW sponsorship.

Mobilizing Structures

This thesis applied McAdam, McCarthy, and Zaid's definition of mobilizing structures as "those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action."[179] This section considered; how does the movement organize, mobilize, and conduct collective action? Mohsen Sazegara reinforced the importance of the internet as the Movement's "most powerful tool for

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[177] Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, *Silencing the Women's Rights Movement in Iran*, 12.

[178] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[179] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, "Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes-Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," in *Chewing Sand: A Process for Understanding Counterinsurgency Operations*, ed. James Spies (Boston: McGraw Hill Publishers, 2008), 31-42.

communications in Iran."[180] According to Sazegara, the regime could not permanently

block Voice of America Farsi and BBC Farsi satellite television channels that external

supporters employ as an instrument for informing the public.[181] Sazegara explained that

the movement relied heavily on physical social networks comprised of students, graduate

organizations, activist organizations, women activists, and labor movements.[182] In

response to effective regime attacks, Sazegara claimed that the Green Movement defeated

government suppression by establishing communication and mobilization systems at the

weakest levels of government control; the town, neighborhood, and family networks.[183]

While demonstrating technological, media, and interpersonal mobilizing

capability, the Green Movement campaign did not capitalize conspicuously on

propaganda or education methods. Arguably politically based, the Green Movement

exploited expatriate appeals for external support but this thesis failed to discover creative

domestic provocations to engage public interest. UW expertise could remedy this

shortfall and significantly improve the movement's potential.

<div align="center">Other Social Movement Considerations</div>

Simone Flynn defines relative deprivation as "the idea that feelings of deprivation

and discontent are related to a desired point of reference. Feelings of relative deprivation

arise when desires become legitimate expectations and those desires are blocked by

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[180] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

society."[184] Satellite television and the internet cultivated Iranian deprivation awareness

and the disputed presidential elections provided an occasion to unite disparate political

frustrations. As Mehdi Khalaji stated, "the true leaders of this movement are students,

women, human rights activists, and political activists who have little desire to work in a

theocratic regime or in a government within the framework of the existing

Constitution."[185] UW expert attribution of Iranian relative deprivation towards

government policy, compounded with increased exhibition of external privileges, could

have further united existing dissident organizations under Green Movement leadership.[186]

Theorists consider human rational choice an essential component of population

mobilization. Robert Keel explained rational choice theory where the human being is a

rational actor, rationality involves an ends—means calculation, humans decide their

behavior based on rational calculation, and central to rational calculation is a cost-benefit

analysis.[187] When considering rational choice, Green Movement leadership must have

demonstrated success potential to motivate rational actor acceptance of internal security

force violent reprisal. The Green Movement must have mitigated radicalized supporter

contributions to decrease rational actor perceived participatory threat potential. As an

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[184] Simone I. Flynn, "Relative Deprivation Theory," *Sociology Reference Guide* (n.d.): 100.

[185] Mehdi Khalaji, "Who's Really Running Iran's Green Movement," *Foreign Policy*, November 4, 2009, accessed September 22, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/11/04/whos_really_running_irans_green_movement.

[186] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, 3-10 – 3-14.

[187] Robert Keel, "Rational Choice and Deterrence Theory" (University of Missouri-St. Louis, July 14, 2005), accessed October 5, 2014, http://www.umsl.edu/~keelr/200/ratchoc.html.

example, Mousavi marginalized Green Movement radical student participation by saying, "I think young people should be trusted. . . . Some minor changes in the appearance of young people should not make us think they have taken anti-national identity. . . . I think our young people are very good, creative and really decent human beings who are proud of their past and their rich culture."[188] UW influence in protests must prevent radicalized participants from denigrating the movement's reputation and ensure that members retain innocent against security force violence.[189] Conversely, the UW campaign could have considered the appropriateness of the "radical flank effect" to use the presence of extremists to encourage appeal and support for moderate Green Movement reforms.[190]

Fence sitters benefited from the movement without contribution. Based on timidity, fear of reprisal, or ideological neutrality, fence sitters avoided the fundamental conflict between sociological good and evil.[191] As the movement gained attention and the Islamic Republic's brutality increased, organizational appeal strengthened. Princeton University's Dr. Kevan Harris recognized that "contrary to media accounts which claimed that an increase in state repression resulted in movement failure, I observed the inverse. Initially, spectacular acts of state violence tended to spur on waves of crowd-

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[188] Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "FT Interview: Mir-Hossein Moussavi."

[189] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, 3-10 – 3-14.

[190] Spies, *Chewing Sand*.

[191] Robert King Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 55.

building emotional energy."[192] Mehdi Khalaji noted that Ayatollah Khamenei's provocative language incited interest from initial fence sitters.[193] UW advisors could encourage non-violent civil disturbance to agitate security force violence. This would challenge fence sitter neutrality by expanding public perception of the Green Movement's moral right.[194]

A Cause (Galula)

Galula concluded that, to be successful a movement's cause must be greater than his adversary's cause.[195] "With a cause, the insurgent has a formidable, if intangible, asset that he can progressively transform into concrete strength."[196] This section evaluates the Green Movement's cause, specifically, the leadership's appeal to the general population.

Green Movement Leaders' Appeal

This thesis considered Mir Houssein Mousavi, Mehdi Hojatoleslam Karroubi, and Mohammad Hojatoleslam Khatami the prominent Green Movement leaders. Movement leadership communicated moderate reform and constitutional adherence, recognizing that

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[192] Kevan Harris, "Failure and Success from the Inside and Outside: Studying Iran's Green Movement," Mobilizing Ideas, December 2, 2013, accessed October 5, 2014, http://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2013/12/02/failure-and-success-from-the-inside-and-outside-studying-irans-green-movement/.

[193] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[194] Special Forces Doctrine Division, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, United States Army, ATP 3.05.1, *Unconventional Warfare*, 3-10 – 3-14.

[195] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice,* 13-15.

[196] Ibid., 14.

radical platforms would solicit aggressive government response.[197] Despite considerable

personal risk, Mousavi, Khatami, and Karroubi articulated composed criticisms against

failed administrative policies, political corruption, and human rights violations rejecting

political denigration of individual officials and preserving the moral imperative. When

describing attacks against family and friends, Karroubi avoided convicting the regime

and demonstrated a moral position with, "I have always defended the rights of the people.

I am prepared for any incident or accident, and I am not afraid. But I am concerned about

Islam, and I am afraid that these people who are attacking and harassing people in the

name of Islam are doing serious damage to our religion in the eyes of the world."[198]

Mousavi appealed to the commercial sector by expressing belief in "the strong presence

of the private sector" particularly in production where the country should make "the best

use of Iran's relative advantages in trade."[199] Mousavi appealed to the proletariat by

committing to existing subsidies that "serve a strong national economy, help safeguard

resources and support the lower classes" but continued soliciting businesses by proposing

gradual elimination of unnecessary subsidies that "can exert a shock because of the

economic structure and the huge subsidies we give for various commodities."[200] Sazegara

exposed Green Movement attempts to garner further support by saying, "one of the

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[197] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[198] Lara Secor, "Interview: Mehdi Karroubi on Iran's Green Movement," *The New Yorker,* October 12, 2010, accessed September 23, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/interview-mehdi-karroubi-on-irans-green-movement.

[199] Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "FT Interview: Mir-Hossein Moussavi."

[200] Ibid.

strategies of the movement, one of the targets of the movement is approaching the poor

people, especially the labor movement and the teachers movement."

Mousavi, Khatami, Karroubi more than likely could expand their support base to

rural disenfranchised populations but their extensive political history could undermine the

elite support base growth. Existing opinions of movement leadership could remove

interest from prominent corporate leadership. If Green Movement leadership failed to

obtain elite alliances, no amount of non-violent proletariat cooperation could produce

government reform. Green Movement leadership potential, appeal, and message

inclusivity existed, but solidifying elite support remained a challenge for a successful

UW campaign.

<u>Favorable Human and Physical Terrain Geographic Conditions</u>

Physical Terrain

As Galula noted in *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, "the role of geography, a large

one in an ordinary war, may be overriding in a revolutionary war. If the insurgent, with

his initial weakness, cannot get any help from geography, he may well be condemned to

failure before he starts."[201] This section considered the geographic and demographic

environment. Galula claimed that a country isolated by natural barriers such as

mountains, ocean, and deserts aided the counterinsurgent.[202] Iran possessed 5,854

kilometers of border containing 2,440 kilometers of coastline. "A high proportion of

coast line to inland borders helps the counterinsurgent because maritime traffic can be

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[201] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 26.

[202] Ibid.

controlled with a limited amount of technical means, which the counterinsurgent possesses or is usually able to acquire."[203] The northwestern borders of Iran comprised the Caucasus and Zagros mountain ranges with a peak elevation of 5,671 meters.[204] Recent operations in Afghanistan demonstrated the challenge and limitations of applying counterinsurgent activities against porous mountain borders. This physical terrain affords UW advisors clandestine lines of communication but the Green Movement's reliance on human geography minimizes the benefits of this topography.

Size

The larger the country the more difficult it is for the counterinsurgent to control it.[205] With 1,648,195 square kilometers of land, Iran's classification as the 18th largest country in the world challenged COIN efforts and afforded considerable opportunity for rural freedom of movement.

Are Border Nations in Support of the Insurgent?

This question alone warrants independent research. In December 2009, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen confirmed that approximately 112,000 US forces remained in Iraq.[206] According to multiple news sources, US forces in Afghanistan

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[203] Ibid.

[204] Central Intelligence Agency, "Iran," The World Fact Book, June 22, 2014, accessed September 24, 2014, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html.

[205] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 26.

[206] Jim Garamone, "Teamwork Key to Iraqi Security, Mullen Says," *American Forces Press Service*, December 19, 2009, accessed October 4, 2014, http://www.defense.gov//news/newsarticle.aspx?id=57211.

totaled approximately 68,000 service members, following the troop surge of 2009 and 2010.[207] A RAND study estimated that in 2009 the United States stationed approximately 2000 service members in Turkey to support defense cooperation missions.[208] This thesis could not determine the US military presence in Azerbaijan, Armenia, or Turkmenistan. Nor did the scope of this research allow a comprehensive discussion of Iranian relations with Caucasus or Caspian Sea partners. The author assumed substantial US troop presence on both western and eastern Iranian borders provided sufficient opportunity for cross border insurgent operations.

Climate

Harsh climate favored counterinsurgent forces that enjoy superior logistical and organizational resources especially if the COIN participant is native and equally accustomed to the environment.[209] Four distinct climate zones exist in Iran.[210] West and southwestern hot dry desert climate and a hot semi-arid zone between the Persian Gulf the Turk Border. The eastern and northern areas of Iran possess mild semi-humid climates with dry summers and mild winters, but the mountainous northern regions possesses sub -3°C snowy wet winters with moderate dry summers. Iran's harshest

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[207] Ann Scott Tyson, "Number of U.S. Troops in Afghanistan Overlooks Thousands of Support Troops," *The Washington Post*, October 13, 2009, accessed October 4, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/12/AR2009101203142.html.

[208] F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 80.

[209] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 27.

[210] WeatherOnline, "Climate of the World: Iran," accessed October 4, 2014, http://www.weatheronline.co.uk/reports/climate/Iran.htm.

northern climate favored counterinsurgent forces but with previous assessments that US sponsored operations would likely occur from the eastern or western borders, these tolerable climate zones favored the insurgent.

Human Terrain

Galula recognized the larger a country's population the more difficult for the counterinsurgent force to control it.[211] With 72 million people, Iran possessed the second largest population in the Middle East and North Africa.[212] Population distribution benefits the insurgent and urban population benefits the counterinsurgent.[213] Counterinsurgent, "control of a town, which is extremely dependent on outside supplies, requires smaller forces than the control of the same number of people spread over the countryside."[214] With more than two-thirds of Iranians residing in several densely populated urban areas, Iranian internal security forces enjoyed the advantage. Mohsen Sazegara addressed this concern by identifying "geographical growth of the Movement" as a priority objective necessary to sustain the organization.[215] If UW efforts could expand Green Movement support to rural communities, counterinsurgent force advantage would proportionally decrease. However, the Green Movement's strength derived from massive protests at strategic urban venues unlikely to develop from a predominantly rural

[211] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 27.

[212] Research and Analysis Division, *Directed Study of Iran*, 2.

[213] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 27.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

support base. Born from urban intellectuals, the Green Movement of 2009 inherently would not have manifested outside of Tehran. Regarding this case study, Galula's theory of population distribution conflicts with inherent Green Movement characteristics of responsive, massive, conspicuous, and political events.

<u>Favorable Resistance Movement Characteristics</u>

Can the Movement Gain External Support?

With a manifesto advocating free and fair elections, the release of political prisoners, freedom of the press, and an accountable representational government; the Green Movement received resounding encouragement from the Western public.[216] As Nadia Mawandi suggested in *Framing Iran: The Islamic Revolution and the Green Movement as Told Through Time Magazine*, western media mustered public attention to Iranian protesters, while similar demonstrations in Georgia and Peru captured little attention. However, movement frailty hindered overt official support resulting in diplomatic condemnation of violent repression of civil liberties.[217] Initially, Green Movement leadership framed their "fight as a purely Iranian one" to avoid government labeling as a foreign backed "velvet" revolution.[218] Eventually, outside support became necessary as Khalaji stated, "I think it's not right to say that for United States or any Western country, 'We don't want to interfere in Iranian internal affairs, we don't want to meddle with Iranian internal affairs.' Because . . . even indifference of the United States

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[216] Abdolkarim Soroush et al., "Manifesto for Iran's Green Movement."

[217] Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Berlusconi of Italy in Press Availability*.

[218] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

and the West, would affect the internal situation in Iran."[219] The Green Movement

quickly accepted and achieved moral support.

Title 22 of the US Code, Chapter 32, Subchapter 32 articulates US policy to

promote "institutions of democratic government and to create the conditions for the

growth of pluralistic societies, including religious tolerance and respect for

internationally recognized human rights."[220] Karroubi succinctly stated the movement

"look[ed] to our own people, to our own country and its interests," avoiding current or

future foreign dependence.[221] "But if they feel a humanitarian obligation to support us,

that is another thing." President Obama's 2010 National Security Strategy offered Iran a

"path to a better future" depending on leaderships' "change of course" and concluded by

confirming American desire that Iran assume its "rightful place in the community of

nations, and enjoys the political and economic opportunities that its people deserve."[222]

The Green Movement could have benefited from US political support.

Willingness to Cooperate with the United States

Although Hooman Majid assessed United States involvement would undermine

the Green Movement, lending "credence to the government's assertion that the movement

is a foreign-inspired plot that will rob Iran of its independence," as described in the

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[219] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[220] Cornell University Law School, U.S. Code § 2296d - Strengthening Democracy, Tolerance, and the Development of Civil Society, accessed October 5, 2014, http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/2296d.

[221] Secor, "Interview: Mehdi Karroubi on Iran's Green Movement."

[222] President of the United States, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010).

previous section, movement leadership articulated willingness for United States

assistance towards an independent Iranian initiative.[223] Sazegara expressed the best

international support stemmed from vital United States assistance establishing free of

charge "freedom of information by satellite" infiltrating the internet through Voice of

America programs.[224] The Fars News Agency reported that prior to the election results

Khatami met with the "American delegation" in Egypt, informed them that Mousavi

would lose the election, and US officials advised him "what to do next."[225] The author

questioned Fars News Agency credibility; however, this allegation occurred prior to the

elections. Factors contributed to consideration of this reports' validity. First, the Islamic

Regime selected Mousavi from hundreds of presidential candidates. Second, in 2009 Iran

considered improving relations with newly elected President Obama. The Fars report

does not guarantee US cooperation with the Green Movement but seems preemptively

paranoid for an election controlled by the regime and favored to be an Ahmadinejad

victory. Considerable evidence existed of Green Movement willingness to cooperate with

scaled US patronage. An UW approach demonstrating an economic, diplomatic,

organizational, and well-resourced concept could be acceptable to movement leadership

and ultimately the majority of sympathizers. The United State's primary challenge

emanated from successful interagency and multinational integration, supplemented with

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[223] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[224] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

[225] Farsi News Agency, "Agency: Iran's Khatami Allegedly Met Americans Prior To Election," Opensource.gov, June 14, 2009, accessed October 5, 2014, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/IAP20090615950013#index=153&searchKey=16667664&rpp=100.

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covert indirect support. This likely required the application of Iranian expatriates possessing undeterminable objectives resulting in unforeseeable outcomes once injected into the situation. Success required timing components only achievable through United States involvement prior to the elections. This subject warrants further research.

US Compatible Objectives and Ideology

United States sponsorship required acceptable Green Movement objectives and ideology. Presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi's original goals "were to wrest the presidency and executive power away from radical hard-liners whose term in office had been marked by economic incompetence, foreign-policy adventurism, and an ideological doctrine that included new limits on civil rights."[226] In an interview, Mousavi candidly declared willingness to negotiate Iran's nuclear program identifying two elements of the nuclear program, energy and weaponization.[227] Mousavi claimed Iranian rights to peaceful nuclear energy under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but suggested that the regime's nuclear weapons program was "negotiable."[228] The previously discussed Green Movement Manifesto outlined Mousavi's promise to improve government administration, economic and foreign policy, and domestic financial and cultural regulations.[229] As demonstrated throughout this essay, Mousavi, Khatami, and Karroubi

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[226] Majid, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement."

[227] Joe Klein and Nahim Siamdoust, "The Man Who Could Beat Ahmadinejad: Mousavi Talks to Time," *Time,* June 12, 2009, accessed September 23, 2014, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1904343,00.html.

[228] Ibid.

[229] Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "FT Interview: Mir-Hossein Moussavi."

communicated an agenda acceptable to US national interests. The scope of this essay prohibited comprehensive analysis of Green Movement leadership's historical speeches, writings, US interactions, or conduct while serving in previous political positions. For example, Mousavi's Iran-Contra contribution and Khatami's negotiations with President Clinton deserved independent research and exceeded this research. As discussed in chapter 2, this thesis considered translated interviews, speeches, and writings pertinent to individuals' participation with the Green Movement. If successful in some capacity, it remained very likely, unanticipated influences and historic ideologies, could ultimately challenge Green Movement-US relations.

Capable Resistance Leadership

Mousavi, Khatami, and Karroubi possessed the requisite leadership experience, education, and political access to warrant US sponsored non-violent reformation of the Islamic Republic. In the event the Green Movement expanded into a full-scale insurgency, their previous political responsibilities afforded them command or oversight of governmental organizations similar to an underground, guerrilla force, and auxiliary.

Conclusion

Could the United States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009 presidential election to coerce change in the Iranian Government advantageous to US interests? Yes, with caveats. First, a UW apparatus must have been present to detect the conditions defined in this chapter. That apparatus must have possessed the capability to establish and maintain relationships with relevant actors. Most importantly, success necessitated comprehensive, accurate, and timely assessments of UW activities'

effect on the operational environment. As conditions transformed, defining and injecting precision influence using subversion, sabotage, propaganda, etc. constituted the military burden. Conversely, effective diplomatic and economic pressure or relief would rely on precise Department of Defense and interagency interpretation of events. Therefore, the greatest challenge derived from the integration of all instruments of national power.

Regime change appeared unfeasible. Disruption of current Iranian domestic and foreign activities seemed feasible, but coercion of reforms by cultivating an acceptable political movement would likely meet feasibility, acceptability, suitability requirements. UW sponsors could not predict the outcome of the reform inspired by the Green Movement. US policy must have well-defined and articulated political and military end states and the approach constituted an enduring endeavor rather than short campaign. Chapter 5 discusses the further organizational factors and contains the author's recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

And since I believe in meddling in everybody's affairs, I suggest the United States actually has things it could do, and it really ought to do them.[230]
— Reuel Gerecht, *Foreign Policy Initiative*

Could the United States have capitalized on the Green Movement's activities after the 2009 presidential election to coerce change in the Iranian government advantageous to US interests?

Yes, chapter 4 demonstrated existing Iranian vulnerabilities resembling theorist's criteria for successful insurgency. Iran's human and geographic terrain proved suitable for a UW campaign, specifically an exploitable population eager for moderate domestic reforms. The Green Movement could have unified a sizeable diverse populous by effectively framing and encouraging acceptable reforms. Movement leaders mobilized opposition groups while tempering participant violence. Mousavi, Karroubi, and Khatami possessed requisite leadership pedigrees. Movement ideologies and objectives coincided with US interests and leadership expressed willingness to work with the US. However, these factors alone do not validate UW potential.

Existing US regional mechanisms and relative freedom of movement largely substantiated Green Movement sponsorship. These mechanisms could have recognized, assessed, and intervened in post-election opportunities. However, responsive resourcing, funding, and execution of joint interagency intergovernmental multinational UW

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[230] Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iran: State of the Green Movement."

activities could not occur without pre-existing authorities and financing. Equally difficult would be the activation of Iranian expertise, agents, and actioning elements.

Unconventional Warfare of this scale requires a comprehensive government approach. In the case of Iran, military and information means could not succeed without complementary diplomatic or economic measures. A UW option demanded synchronization, coordination, and integration of USG departments and agencies, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector.[231]

UW and Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic

The United States advances national interests through effective application of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power. As a strategic politico-military tool, UW spans all elements of national power requiring a whole of government approach. The National Security Strategy and the Unified Campaign Plan articulate the President's security priorities and define the Geographic Combatant Commander's mission and responsibilities. The Geographic Combatant Commander's theatre strategy, campaign, and plans achieve national strategic objectives through effective coordinated operations. In conjunction with State Department partner development programs and initiatives, Theater Special Operations Commands plan and control special operations, to support regional unified actions. In this case, by applying the full spectrum of SOF core activities and operations in a UW campaign to enable a resistance movement to coerce, disrupt, or dissuade a government. UW opportunities result from regional mechanisms established from operationalized strategic military and

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[231] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2013), xiii.

diplomatic guidance, inherently requiring a unified application of all diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements.

As the principal instrument for engaging states and foreign groups to advance US interests and objectives, diplomatic entities corroborating with the Geographic Combatant Command develop regional political-military strategies to shape the environment. The Department of State could reinforce UW gains through the measured application of diplomatic activities.[232] For example, as UW advisors recognized Green Movement progress, the United States could incentivize third party influence over Iranian domestic policies, directly encourage moderate Iranian reform through diplomatic engagement, or propose concessions to sanctions—restrictions following visible human rights improvements. Appropriate diplomatic actions could have complemented UW sponsorship if military efforts remained covert and Iranian responses could be accurately monitored.

United States inspired inter-organizational, transnational corporate, or multinational economic incentives could influence Iranian response to Green Movement activities or objectives. Conversely, proxy adverse economic drivers could further penalize Iranian intolerance, cripple domestic markets, and escalate civil intolerance to fiscal hardships attributed to systemic aggressions. For instance, US apparatus could inspire allied nations with Iranian commercial partnerships to disrupt existing relationships in response to human rights violations or perceived election fraud. Furthermore, proxy mercantile activities could injure moderate business and advantage IRGC affiliates inciting further grievance against government corruption and

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[232] Ibid., I-12.

mismanagement. These actions could be attributable or deniable to the United States, require continuous manipulate and assessment, and exceed the Theater Special Operations Commander's authority and expertise. A later section discusses a mechanism for managing these diverse approaches.

<u>Is the US Postured to Conduct UW?</u>

Is the United States prepared to execute enduring UW campaigns? SOF posture, activities, and missions differ regionally. The Iranian case study contained regional mechanisms essential for executing appropriate UW actions. This case study may represent an anomaly rather than the norm and differs from current options. Nonetheless, it serves as an example of how UW could serve in any environment, but demands a tailored and well-developed approach. Naturally, Middle East and African Nation UW possibilities contrast with those in the Asian-Pacific, European, and North American Theaters. SOF presence alone does not justify potential. Diplomatic and economic prerequisites must also occur, as well as authorities and existing human and physical infrastructure. How can we mitigate this disparity? Enduring permanent UW actors should develop regional mechanisms to generate UW considerations and possibilities. There must be permanent United States Special Operations Command infrastructure to transcend fluctuating politics and irresolute public appetite. As the Department of Defense UW proponent, the Army should resource a permanent shaping element, integrating existing core operations and activities into a resilient apparatus responsible for recognizing and assessing US intervention criteria. The scope of this organization requires a long-term interagency mechanism.

UW Joint Interagency Task Force

Chapter 4's insurgent and counterinsurgent factors alone cannot adequately measure UW feasibility. A long-term campaign requires existing joint interagency intergovernmental multinational mechanisms and a responsive executing authority to administer all UW competencies. This mechanism exceeds standing organization, personnel, and resource constraints demanding a joint UW special mission unit to provide US policymakers with a viable global UW option. Within American capabilities are those to disrupt, coerce, overthrow but they are little understood and less often used. The role of special operations could address this legacy gap, illustrated by the case of the Green Movement, to advance the USG's agenda in a more meaningful way. Similar to standing regional, counter narcotic, and counter terror task forces, a UW Joint Interagency Task Force could integrate US mechanisms, detect and resolve capability deficiencies, and produce and command UW options in support of strategic policy. An increasingly volatile and unpredictable world requires a policy of committed prevention and cost-effective interagency mechanisms reducing the requirement for cumbersome and expensive conventional force introduction. As surgical strike apparatus demonstrated economic counter terror options, precision UW can provide similar strategic "shaping" options. Without joint service and interagency participation, Army Special Force's developing UW capability cannot reach its potential as the preventative mechanism to reduce US military's ubiquitous global responsibilities. Recommend further research to determine the feasibility, acceptability, and architecture of a UW special mission unit.

Can we Accurately Measure Feasibility?

For UW to become a practical strategic policy, decision makers must receive justifiable determinations of UW potential. Existing tactical evaluations operationalize UW policy, but existing feasibility framework proves insufficient. The author incorporated social movement theory and counterinsurgent theorists' criteria for successful insurgencies into the present feasibility assessment. Other scholarly research applied game theory to numerically valued Iranian operational variables, versus numerically valued Green Movement social movement theory factors.[233] This literature demonstrated advantage in quantifying government characteristics, however, Green Movement characteristics were arguably less concrete and unrealistic to numerically value. The challenges arise from quantifying political, military, economic, etc. factors both independently, chronologically, and against historic case studies. This requires accurate data, comprehensive criteria, and indisputable reference data. This literature contributed to the author's argument for further research to develop a quantifying UW feasibility framework.

For policymakers to accept UW as a viable option against belligerent nations, transnational criminal organizations, and violent extremist groups, the Department of Defense must engineer a comprehensive instrument for measuring UW potential success. This tool must be a joint initiative and would benefit from administrative—congressional input. An assessment instrument intended for both military determinants and political advising requires aggressive and creative participant involvement to generate justifiable

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[233] Major William C. McDowell and Major Zachary F. Basford, "Iranian Regime Reform: Opportunities and Consequences" (Masters Thesis, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, 2010).

criteria acceptable to policymakers. Administrations and Congress are more likely to understand and authorize activities generated from an assessment framework they designed. This consideration appears challenging but the greater an understanding of the low visibility military options available to decision makers, the greater flexibility and opportunity SOF provides the government.

<u>Recommendations for Further Research</u>

This research constituted an initial assessment of this case study. Future considerations for study include analysis of the Green Movement's effect on the 2013 Iranian Presidential elections, the re-engagement of nuclear weapons talks, and the organizations direct influence on the 2010 Arab Spring. Similar unexploited opportunities should be analyzed by UW academia to further the volume of literature relevant to the special operations profession.

As a reformist insurgency, the Green Movement eluded existing UW doctrinal parameters. Insufficient doctrine exists providing the UW planner relevant considerations for limited military activities to support predominantly political insurgencies. Researched information recognizes political movements, discusses information and influence operations, or provides subversion alternatives, but all fail to provide adequate considerations for the UW planner. This is a significant shortfall and the author recommends researching similar case studies and expanding doctrine to support the full spectrum of UW options. UW doctrinal research remains primarily guerrilla warfare based with less emphasis on diplomacy, information, and economics activities conducted by military advisors. Research illustrates contemporary UW endstates more often desire disruption or reform conducive to sponsors' national interest not government overthrow.

Further research could compare successful activities from reformist insurgencies from dissimilar governmental organizations.

The author recommends comparing Iran's Green Movement to similar reformist insurgencies. This provides further understanding of the Iranian case study, could advance existing feasibility criteria, and may produce framework for analyzing reformist insurgency sponsorship.

Covert Operations or Unconventional Warfare?

Is this a better opportunity for Covert Action (CA) vice Unconventional Warfare? SOF operations resemble CAs and synchronize specifically in theaters of war. The human and physical infrastructure presented in 2009 would support this. As the Global War on Terror visibly linked government agencies with SOF and special operations resembled CAs, should the US consider an architectural transformation?

Covert Action versus Unconventional Warfare

Covert Action originates from Presidential findings. UW comprises operations derived from executive orders. Both activities could occur simultaneously with or without corroboration; they could even be mutually beneficial. Special operations constitute skill specific activities executable under various authorities by combatant elements. Conduct of these missions can be within or outside of theaters of war. Greater authorities occur within Title 10 Theater of war operations. CA comprises strategic options likely exceeding an individual skill, thereby necessitating the integration of multiple agencies. Unless in a theater of war, these actors are non-combatants and risk prosecution for espionage. Another significant contrast results from attribution. CA by definition should

produce non-attributable effects. UW can be covert or clandestine therefore affording delayed or deniable attribution. These differences illustrate the challenge in applying CA or UW and the risks associated with each. The Green Movement case study would benefit from the concentration of both CA and UW missions. The Global War on Terror legal parameters for this also warrants further research.

Is this effective? Could the previously considered Joint Interagency Task Force resolve the legal, material, personnel, and oversight challenges faced presently by action officers in the Middle East and African Nation? This is an example of the line crossing between SOF appropriate missions and Intelligence Community appropriate missions. The United States should consider other models that exceed defense or intelligence parameters. As the nation's greatest threats exceed legal espionage or combatant criteria, the current apparatus may require transformation to further link SOF and the Intelligence Community. Thereby, providing decision makers with a robust reflexive organization postured to weave through the international constraints that criminal organizations, extremist groups, and rogue nations, operate within.

Conclusion

The Green Movement constituted an opportunity for the United States to implement an all-of-government approach to a long-standing problem. US options, specifically, UW could have induced moderate Iranian social and political reforms. This circumstance differed greatly from comparable historical prospects because of the significant US military and diplomatic presence in the region. While Iranian internal security forces demonstrated competent counterinsurgent capability, the research in this thesis demonstrates the presence of systemic vulnerabilities optimal for non-violent

political influence. If US agencies collectively pursued well-defined objectives, UW activities could have significantly contributed to a manageable "soft" campaign against Iran.

This thesis refrained from examining, should the United States have attempted UW through the Green Movement. This research represented a special operations planner's assessment of UW options and not a determination of the US' foreign policy. The challenge of special operations lies in the inevitable crossing of tactical, operational, and strategic lines and the importance of disseminating accurate actionable information. This thesis demonstrated the vitality of joint agency assessment and execution of strategic options.

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

February 2009 – UK and Germany urge for tougher sanctions against Iran.
    Israel vows to prevent a nuclear capable Iran.
March 2009 – Iran tests air-to-sea missile.
    French intelligence sources claim Iran produced more low-enriched uranium than
    previously believed.
April 2009 – Iranian President Ahmadinejad welcomes fundamental changes in US
    policies.
    Majiles [Parliament] will consider ties with Obama administration.
    Religious authority Ayatollah Fadlallah praises Obama's approach toward Iran.
    Iranian lawmakers say US should compensate for its past mistakes against Iran.
    Iranian soccer team prevented from training with US soccer team.
    Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei says Iran will not bow to bullying.
    US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton welcomes dialogue with Iran.
    US-Iranian journalist Roxana Saberi imprisoned.
May 2009 – Ayatollah Khatami states no change in US policy with Obama, claims
    America using terrorism in Iraq.
    Roxana Saberi's release seen as gesture of "thawing" Iran-US relations.
    Iranian Presidential hopeful Mohsen Rezai pledges to constructively interact with
    US if elected. US urges Israel to "tone down" rhetoric against Iran.
May 5 2009 – Iran announces successful test fire of Sejjil-2 missile.
May 21 2009 – Presidential candidates Ahmadinejad, Rezai, Mousavi, and Karroubi
    confirmed.
May 23 2009 – Iraq government calls for expulsion of Mojahedin Khalq Organization
    (MKO).
May 24 2009 – Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project agreement signed.
    Majilis openly defends support of Hamas and Hezbollah.
May 25 2009 - Presidential candidate Rezai announces his government will be militarily
    aggressive against Israel.
May 28 2009 – Sunni insurgent group Jondollah claims suicide attack against Zahedan
    Shiite mosque. Iranian officials allege US sponsorship.
May 30 2009 – IRGC diffuses a bomb on a domestic flight.
May 31 2009 – Iran will establish 35 Presidential election voting stations across the US.
June 1 2009 – Iran's Judiciary Chief Shahroudi claims evidence of US sponsorship of
    terrorist groups in Iran.
June 2 2009 – Iranian official claims US responsible for instigating division among Sunni
    and Shiites in southeastern Iran.
June 3 2009 – Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Presidential candidate Mousavi clash
    in televised date.
June 4 2009 – Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei urges strong voter turnout for
    Presidential elections.

June 7 2009 – Senior Iranian official alleges US psychological war against Iran.
June 12 2009 – Presidential elections. Large voter turnout.
June 13 2009 – Post-election protests begin. Presidential candidate Mousavi alleges
    fraudulent voting.
June 14 2009 – Tehran's Fars News Agency reports rumour former President Khatami
    travelled to US to inform officials that Presidential candidate Mousavi would lose.
June 15 2009 – Europeans protests against Iranian violence against protesters.
    Mousavi supporters protest, 8 reported dead.
June 17 2009 – European envoys summoned to Iranian Foreign Ministry because of
    governmental comments against the regime.
    Supporters of Mousavi gather at Iranian Embassy in Kuwait.
June 18 2009 – Iran's Intelligence Ministry claims terrorist bomb plots in Tehran foiled
    and arrests divulged networks linked to US and Israel.
    Mousavi supporters mass protest. Reported 100,000 mourn the eight deaths.
June 20 2009 – Unarmed Neda Agha Soltan killed in protest. Video goes viral.
June 21 2009 – Iran calls for downgrading Iran-UK relations citing Britain's
    "mischievous" role in the aftermath of the elections.
June 22 2009 – Majiles claims preparation for legal prosecution of Mousavi citing
    harmful statements.
June 23 2009 – Washington Times correspondent arrested for alleged espionage. Syrian
    Foreign Minister criticizes Iranian protesters.
June 25 2009 – Hezbollah accuses West of fomenting protests in Iran. Venezuela
    President Hugo Chavez blames CIA for unrest in Iran.
June 26 2009 – Tehran mayor criticizes Interior Ministry for failing to inform people of
    the election result details. G8 urges Tehran to observe fundamental human rights.
June 28 2009 – Iran urges political factions to unite and foil plots by interfering powers.
    EU supports Britain after eight Tehran embassy staff arrested.
July 2 2009 – Presidential candidate Karroubi apologies to Iranian people for trusting
    government officials who use violence.
July 4 2009 – Keyhan right wing newspaper calls for prosecution of Mousavi and
    Khatami. President Ahmadinejad offers to debate President Obama.
July 5 2009 – Iran criticizes the British embassy and BBC for organizing post-election
    riots.
July 7 2009 – EU ruled to deny Iranian visa applications to 27 member states.
July 9 2009 – US frees Five Iranian diplomats captured in Iraq in 2007.
July 10 2009 – Kurdish Party urges Western support of Iranian Democratization.
July 11 2009 – US and Iraq discussions produce the release of 15 Iranians.
July 12 2009 – Iran blames Western interference for Muslim Xinjiang unrest in China.
July 13 2009 – Iranian ambassador to Japan accuses US for inciting unrest in Iran.
July 14 2009 – Iranian state TV reports 13 members of Malek Rigi terrorist group hanged
    after confessing direct support from the US.
July 17 2009 – Rafsanjani, Mousavi, and Khatami lead a demonstration of reformists in
    Tehran.
    Israel seizes Iranian weapons and disrupts program to aid Hamas in the Gaza
    strip.

July 18 2009 – Iranian Intelligence Minister claimed Israel plotted to assassinate President Ahmadinejad in collaboration with Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO).

July 19 2009 – Secretary Clinton reaffirms President Obama's interest in engaging Tehran.

July 20 2009 – UK newspaper reports 36 Iranian army officers arrested for planning to attend reformist Rafsanjani's prayer sermon.
British Embassy staff member Hoseyn Rassam released from prison.

July 22 2009 – Secretary Clinton warns Iran that US will boost defence of regional US allies if Tehran does not cease nuclear program.

August 5 2009 – President Ahmadinejad sworn in for second term.

August 9 2009 – IRGC official accuses Mousavi, Karroubi, and Khatami of inciting unrest.
Iranian National Security and Foreign Policy Commission announces British plot against the Islamic Republic.

August 10 2009 – Iraq pleads with Iran to release three American tourists.

August 12 2009 – Majiles investigation denies claims of sexual harassment of protesters. Karroubi plans to present evidence of prison rape.

August 15 2009 – Mousavi takes steps to establish Green Path of Hope party.

August 17 2009 – Iran bans Etermad-e Melli newspaper for printing Karroubi's reports that election protesters were sexually abused in prison.

August 21 2009 – After two years of restrictions, Iran grants UN access to key nuclear facilities.

September 18 2009 – Qods Day, or Jerusalem Day. In the past, Iranians shouted "Death to Israel" at rallies. In 2009, protesters instead shouted "Death to Russia," because it was the first government to recognize Ahmadinejad's election.

November 4 2009 – Anniversary of the US Embassy takeover. Pupils traditionally get the day off and schools bus them to the old American compound for a rally. In 2009, thousands turned out on the streets to instead protest their own regime, not the United States. Chants of "Death to America" were replaced by cries of "Death to No One." Some even shouted, "A green Iran doesn't need nuclear weapons." More pointedly, others shouted, "Obama, you are either with us – or with them."

November 4 – Operation Four Species: Israeli navy commandos of Shayetet 13 board and seize the MV Franco cargo ship in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and its cargo of hundreds of tons of weapons allegedly bound from the Islamic Republic of Iran for Hezbollah in Lebanon.

October 2009 – Iran blamed US and UK for suicide bomb resulting in 18 IRGC deaths.[234]

October 9 2009 – Announced that President Barrack Obama wins Nobel Peace Prize.

December 7 2009 – National Students Day, commemorating the deaths of three students in protests around the time of Vice President Nixon's 1953 visit to Tehran. The turnout was the largest since the summer and spread to campuses across the country, despite increasingly harsh government tactics, including alleged torture, rape and deaths in prison.

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[234] Wright, *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy.*

December 19 2009 – The death of Grand Ayatollah Ali Montazeri, Iran's leading dissident cleric and spiritual father to the Green Movement, sparked more mass demonstrations. Crowds were enormous in the holy city of Qom, earlier off-limits to protests, and elsewhere. Montazeri had been the clerical face of the opposition since 1989, when he was fired as heir apparent to Khomeini, for criticizing the regime's mass executions and failure to live up to its revolutionary promises. The government responded to the outpouring by redistributing the statement about Montazeri's dismissal as supreme leader 20 years earlier.

December 27 2009 – Ashura, the holiest day of the year for Shiites as they commemorate the seventh century martyrdom of Hussein, the Prophet Mohammed's grandson. Hundreds of thousands turned out in mass protests. In response, government forces opened fire on unarmed civilians in the streets. Turmoil spread to at least 10 major cities. There were several confirmed deaths, scores of injured and hundreds of arrests. The fact that a clerical regime had opened fire on peaceful demonstrators on the day of Ashura was a serious departure from a long tradition of non-violence on that day.

Information collected from the Open Source Center at opensoure.gov.[235]

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